

**THE NEW TESTAMENT**  
**Paraphrase/Exposition**  
**vols. 4, 5, 6**

**JOHN GUYSE**

**1775**

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**THE NEW TESTAMENT, Paraphrase**

**THE PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR**

Vols. 4, 5, 6

**Translated by: JOHN GUYSE**

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THE  
PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR.  
IN SIX VOLUMES.

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VOLUME the FOURTH:

Containing

PAUL'S EPISTLES to the CORINTHIANS,  
GALATIANS, and EPHESIANS,  
PARAPHRASED, &c.

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THE  
Practical Expofitor;  
AN  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT,  
In the FORM of a  
PARAPHRASE;  
WITH  
OCCASIONAL NOTES  
In their proper places for further EXPLICATION,  
AND SERIOUS  
RECOLLECTIONS  
At the Clofe of every CHAPTER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN  
ALPHABETICAL TABLE  
OF

The principal things contained in the PARAPHRASE,  
efpecially in the NOTES.

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*For the Ufe of the FAMILY and CLOSET.*

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BY JOHN GUTSE, D. D.

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THE THIRD EDITION.

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A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
First Epistle of the Apostle PAUL  
T O T H E  
C O R I N T H I A N S,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The PREFACE to the First Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.

**C**ORINTH was an antient famous city of *Achaia*, situated on an isthmus, or neck of land, between the *Ægean* and the *Ionian* seas, which joined *Peloponnesus*, now called the *Morea*, to *Greece*; and so it lay peculiarly convenient for merchandize, as it had two commodious ports near it, one on the east, and the other on the west side of the isthmus. By this means it became a city of great resort, by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, for trade and learning; grew exceeding rich and populous; and abounded with merchants, orators, and philosophers; all which circumstances fed the pride and luxury of the people, who were infamous for uncleanness to a proverb. Among these the apostle *Paul* preached, and God was with him, for about two years; in which space of time many believed, and were formed into a gospel church.

But as this church was gathered from among persons of the forementioned ill characters, and was constituted of some *Jewish*, but mostly of *Gentile* converts, as appears from *Acts* xviii. and *1 Cor.* xii. 2. So, not long after the apostle's departure from them, too much of the old leaven appeared among them, and there arose, at least, one noted false teacher, and probably others under him, of the *Jewish* faction, who set himself up, as the head of a party against the apostle, to defame him, and run down his authority; and who fomented a spirit of pride among the the rich and learned, and turbulent contentions amongst all that he could influence. These disorders were attended with other gross defections in doctrines and morals, worship and discipline; such as a contempt of the gospel of salvation by a crucified Saviour, and the apostle's plain way of

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preaching it; luxury, uncleanness, covetousness, and litigious lawsuits one with another; abuses of their Christian liberty; communion with idolaters in eating of their sacrifices; great irregularities in their religious assemblies, and particularly in celebrating the Lord's supper; priding themselves in their riches, learning, and spiritual gifts; indulging an uncharitable temper, and denying the important article of the resurrection of the dead.

As there were greater disorders and corruptions in this church than in any other that the apostle wrote to; and as an account of some of them had been brought to him *personally*, by witnesses of undoubted credit, *chap.* i. 11.; and he had received a *letter* from his friends in that church, desiring an answer to several questions relating to others of them, (see the note on *chap.* vii. 1.) he took occasion, about two or three years after he had left them, to send this epistle from *Ephesus*, as is generally, and I think justly, concluded from *chap.* xvi. 8, 19. and not from *Philippi*, as the postscript, added by latter ages, would have it. See the note on *chap.* xvi. 8.

The connection and sentiments, in several parts of this epistle, are much more difficult and obscure than I imagined, till I came closely to consider it; but this I take to be chiefly owing to our unacquaintedness with the state of things in that church, and the representation that had been made of it to the apostle, by word of mouth, and by letter, which he all along keeps in view, and replies to; and which, were it before us, would doubtless cast a clear and obvious light upon the whole: But it is plain, from many passages, that its great design was to correct irregularities which had crept in among them. Hence the apostle sets himself, in the former part of the epistle to the end of *chap.* vi. to take off the invidious aspersions that had been cast upon his character; to establish his apostolic authority; to expose the presumptuous pretences of the false teachers, and bring those members of the church off from them that had espoused their party; to insist on an excommunication of the incestuous person, and on the preservation of the purity of the church; and to cure the schisms and defaults that were made in it, and unite all its members in the faith, love, and holiness of the gospel. And in the latter part from *chap.* vii. to the end of the epistle, he answers the questions that had been sent to him; and gives such directions with reference thereunto as he knew to be most needful for them; still carrying on his main view against his chief enemies and all their adherents: And concludes the whole with friendly admonitions, and salutations in the Lord.



## C H A P. I.

*The apostle Paul prefaces this Epistle with an assertion of his apostolic authority; a salutation of the church at Corinth; and a congratulation on account of their conversion, and the gifts bestowed upon them, 1,—10. Exhorts them to brotherly love, and reproves them for the divisions which he had heard were among them, 11,—16. Asserts and vindicates the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, and his own plain way of preaching it, as a fundamental article of the Christian faith, and as admirably calculated to advance the glory of God, and humble the creature before him, 17,—31.*

## TEXT.

**P**AUL called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sotheneus our brother,

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called

## PARAPHRASE.

**I** PAUL, who have not thrust myself into office, but was called immediately by Jesus Christ himself \* to be one of his apostles, (see the note on Rom. i. 1.) according to the mere good pleasure and eternal choice of God the Father †, even I am the inspired writer of this epistle; and Sotheneus, a dear and faithful brother in the Lord, and in the work of the ministry, though not in the apostleship, thoroughly approves of it, and joins with me in it.

2 We send the most affectionate salutations to the society of believers at Corinth, the metropolis of Achaia; which being incorporated, by mutual consent, for the celebration of all divine ordinances, according to Christ's appointment, is a particular church of God's own institution, in which he dwells, as in his holy temple; I mean them who, being in church communion, are supposed, in the judgment of charity, to have

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\* The apostle Paul, in the inscription and preface of most of his Epistles, not only mentions his own name, but asserts his apostolic office; and it was the rather needful that he should do this, in his epistle to the *Corinthians*; because some among them had disputed, depreciated, and denied his authority: And as, in several other epistles, he associates Timothy with himself, not as joining with him in forming those epistles, but in the salutation; and as entirely concurring with him in sentiment and design: So he here mentions Sotheneus in like manner, that he might the better recommend and enforce this epistle to the Jewish converts at Corinth, on account of his acceptable character and reputation among them; he having been formerly, as I take it, a ruler in one of their synagogues. (See the note on Acts xviii. 17.) But immediately after the salutation, and in

several other parts of the epistle, the apostle speaks of himself in the singular number, to intimate that he alone composed it, under divine inspiration, as an apostle of Christ. The like may be, more or less, observed in all the epistles that begin with Paul's and Timothy's names.

† Since the apostle well knew, that all things whatsoever were either permitted and over-ruled, or effected by the will and providence of God; we must suppose that he meant something extraordinary, when he speaks of his being called to the apostleship by the will of God, and lays so great a stress upon it, as he doth here, and 2 Epist. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Col. i. 1. and 2 Tim. i. 1. And he therein seems to refer to what Ananias said, when he told him, (Acts xxii. 14, 15.) that the God of his Father had chosen him to know his will, and see the Just Sac., &c.

called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours,

have been set apart for himself \*, by his special choice of them in *Christ Jesus*, as their Head, *before the foundation of the world*, (Eph. i. 4.); and who, in consequence of this, are externally called by the gospel, and, as it is to be presumed, are internally and efficaciously called, by the special operation of the Spirit, to be an holy people, both in heart and life; and so are properly denominated saints, (ἁγῶναι ἄγιον). And, with the members of that particular church, we include all in their neighbourhood, and in every place whatsoever, to whom these presents may come; and who in testimony of their being real Christians, religiously invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the object of their faith, worship, and obedience, and as the great and only Mediator between God and man; I lay *our Lord*, because he is, for all saving purposes, as much their Lord as he is ours, who address this epistle to them.

3 Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 May all the riches of divine love and favour, together with all the blessed fruits thereof in a work of grace; and may reconciliation with God, Peace in your own souls, and among yourselves, together with all desirable prosperity, be abundantly multiplied to all, and every one of you, from God the Father, as the original spring of all blessings; and from Jesus Christ, as the only Peace-Maker, by the merit of his blood, and the Author and Giver of the benefits of his purchase, in an inseparable conjunction with the Father!

4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which

4 I heartily congratulate you, and bless the God of all grace, even my God, in every remembrance of you, on account of the free favour of God toward you, as that appears in the gifts and graces of his Spirit †, which

#### N O T E S.

\* As *sanctified* sometimes signifies *set apart*, (see the note on *1 Jn* x. 36.) *this*, rather than being *made holy*, seems to be the sense of the word here, and in *Jud* ver. 1. because it is spoken of in both these places, as what was done by God the Father in Christ, *before* the persons mentioned were called to be saints, and in distinction from it. This preserves a difference between *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, and *called to be saints*, which would otherwise be much the same thing: And this makes the ideas more consonant to the inscriptions and intimations, which this apostle prefixes to several of his other Epistles: where he speaks of believers, as *beloved of God*, and *called to be saints*, (Rom. i. 7) as *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*, that they might be holy, (Eph. i. 4.) and as persons in whom there were apparent tokens of their election of God,

from the efficacy of the gospel upon them, (1 *Thess* i. 3, 4, 5.) And the apostle Peter directs his first epistle, (chap. i. 2.) to the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

† It can scarce be thought that the apostle should so abundantly bless God for the spiritual gifts bestowed on the Corinthians, unless there were good grounds to hope, in the judgment of charity, that great numbers of them, which gave the denomination to the whole, were also partakers of special grace, to their own salvation: And therefore, as the expressions will bear it, *The grace of God gives to them*, and their being enriched in every thing, may be considered as tokens of God's peculiar favour to themselves, as well as his gifts, to qualify them to be useful to others.

This

which is given  
you by Jesus  
Christ;

which he has bestowed upon you, through Jesus Christ, as the great Mediator, in whom (*τῷ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΩ*) he looks upon you, and deals with you, as his peculiar favourites; and by whom his love is freely manifested and communicated to you, and its happy effects are purchased for you. I cannot but hope this concerning you in general.

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.

5 Because (*ὅτι*) ye are not only enriched with grace, for the salvation of your own souls by Jesus Christ, the Head of the church; but many of you are also plentifully furnished with such spiritual gifts, as render you capable of speaking, with freedom and fluency, to the edification of others; and are abundantly filled with all necessary knowledge \* of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, relating to a crucified Saviour, that ye might set them forth in a just light, as the truth is in Jesus.

6 Even as the testimony of Christ was consumed in you.

6 Even as the witness, which was given to him, and from him, by his apostles, was proved and established, with the highest demonstrations, in your own mind and consciences, when *the gospel came to you, at the first in your conversion, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and effectually worked in you that believe,* (1 Thess. i. 5. and ii. 13.)

7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

7 So that ye are not remarkably defective in any spiritual gift, that is requisite for your own and others edification; nor are ye inferior therein to any of the churches, while ye, together with them, are looking, longing, praying, preparing, and patiently waiting, with faith and hope, for the revelation (*τῆς ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΕΩΣ*) of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, *who will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,* (2 Thess. i. 10.)

8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless

8 Who will likewise, in order thereunto, establish you in the faith, hope, and holiness of the gospel, by a continual supply of all further needful aids, in the way of your duty, and in a diligent use of the means of his own appointment, all the days of your lives; that ye may be acquitted from guilt and condemnation, and

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This might well be a great cause of the apostle's rejoicing on their behalf; and it is upon this charitable presumption that he speaks with confidence of their being confirmed to the end, and mentions the faithfulness of God as the security of it, ver. 8, 9. (See the note on ver. 9.)

\* That all knowledge does not relate to the whole scheme of the gospel, is evident from the apostle's speaking of them, as babes in

Christ, whom he fed with milk, and not with meat, *κενῶς*. says he, *ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able,* (chap. iii. 1, 2.) And therefore I take all knowledge to relate to the great doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, which he speaks of as what they had received, ver. 13, 30. and as the principal subject of his ministry among them, chap. ii. 3, 2.

less in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been

and made perfect in holiness, at the great day of Christ's appearing; when he, who now *keeps you from falling, will present you faultless, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.* (Jude v. 24.)

9. There is the surest ground of confidence concerning this, with respect to every one of you, that are in reality what ye profess to be: † For the infinitely gracious and unchangeable God is faithful and true to his covenant; to his Son; to them that trust in him; and to his own good work in you, whereby he has raised your hope in him; even that God by whom ye were effectually called, not only to a participation of external privileges and spiritual gifts, but likewise to an holy communion with, and conformity to his Son Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour; that ye may have an internal fellowship with him in his merit and love, graces, holiness, and joys, in virtue of your union with him.

10 Now, to come to one of the chief occasions of my sending this epistle, I earnestly intreat and exhort you, my beloved brethren, by all the authority and endearments, and by the solemn profession ye make, of the Lord Jesus Christ, as our only Head and Saviour, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,* (Eph. iii. 15.) in opposition to all the party names which have been contentiously set up among you, (ver. 11, 12.) that every one of you would agree to talk of the doctrines of Christ, just as ye received them, pure and uncorrupted, from his apostles, (2 Cor. ii. 17.) and that there be no schisms (*σχίσματα*) among you, to the making of factions in the church, and alienating your hearts and affections one from another, (see the note on chap. xi. 18.); but that ye be entirely knit, and regularly framed together, (*καταρτισμένοι*) as members of the same body, in one and the same divine and holy sentiments, and in the same deliberate judgment and design, (*ὡς ἓν*) and so may *follow after righteousness, faith, charity, and peace with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart,* (2 Tim. ii. 22.)

11 The reason of my so earnestly recommending this amiable unity, is not from any *ungrounded* suspicions of your defects therein; but because some of our faithful

#### N O T E.

† I do not see how the *faithfulness* of God can be considered as an argument to prove that these *Corinthians* should be *confirmed to the end, that they might be blameless, &c.* unless we suppose that the apostle looked upon the persons spoken of, as partakers of saving

grace; for there is no promise to engage God's faithfulness, that they who have only spiritual gifts shall be confirmed to the end; but there are many promises of that nature to true believers.

been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

11 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ,

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul cruci-

faithful friends of *Chloe's* family have, to the grief of my soul, brought me certain information concerning you, whom I esteem and own as my brethren in the Lord, and of whom I hoped better things, that there are warm strifes, (*ἑριδοί*) and uncharitable dissensions among you, which have thrown you into sects and parties, under various heads and leaders, as though ye looked upon them as the Lords of your consciences, that have dominion over your faith.

12 I mean, and can't but solemnly remonstrate against it, that, as ye are generally ranged into different denominations, ye call yourselves by the name of some distinguished chief, whom ye respectively admire and extol, to the depreciating and contemning of others; as for instance, to put the case in the least invidious light I can, Some of your *Gentile* converts cry up *Paul*, as the apostle of the uncircumcision, and the instrument of their conversion, (chap. iv. 15.) and others are as fond of *Apollos*, as an eloquent and fervent preacher, (*Acts* xviii. 24, 25 ) who watered the seed which *Paul* had sown among you, (chap. iii. 6.) and others of you that are converts from *Judaism*, are all for *Peter*, as the apostle of the circumcision; and so ye severally put your own applauded ministers in the place of Christ himself, as if they were your Lords and Saviours, and at the same time reject others with scorn, as if they were not to be regarded at all: And others of you pretend to be so much for *Christ alone*, as to despise all means and instruments, even his apostles and most eminent servants themselves, together with his word and ordinances, as dispensed by them; and to be so immediately under the teachings of his Spirit, as to need no other instructor.

13 But, to convince you of the unreasonableness and absurdity of all this, let me first ask those of you, that pretend to be so much for *Christ*, as to be above all gospel ministrations and ordinances, Is the person of Christ to be separated from his offices; or his offices from his way of executing them by the ministry of his servants? Is he divided from *Paul*, *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, or any other of his faithful ministers, whom he has promised to be with to the end of the world? Are they not all embarked in the same glorious cause of Christ? and don't they all preach by his authority, and according to his will, as the Head and Saviour of the whole church? Or are his gracious communications, by the Spirit

cruccified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Spirit, to be separated from the means of his own appointment for conveying them? Is not a whole Christ, in every view of him, to be received according to the revelation he has made of himself by any of his servants to you? And permit me to ask those of you, that set up one or another minister as your Head, instead of Christ, and run down all others, Is *Paul* to be extolled by one party, *Apollos* by another, and *Peter* by a third, in the least competition with Christ? I would, to prevent envy, expostulate this case a little with you, as to myself? Did *Paul* die to make atonement for your sins? Or were ye baptized by the authority, and into the faith, worship, and obedience of *Paul*, that ye should be disciples to him, and dedicated to his service? Or were ye not therein consigned over to the Lord Jesus himself, as being baptized in his name?

14 I thank God, that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius:

14 For my own part, since such factions are formed among you, to the dishonour of Christ's name, I esteem it a kind disposal of Providence, and heartily bless God for it, that though I planted the church at *Corinth*, as the instrument of their conversion, (chap. iii. 6,—10.) yet I administered the ordinance of baptism, with mine own hands, to none of them, except two persons of note; one was *Crispus*, the chief ruler of a *Jewish* synagogue in your city, (*Acts* xviii. 8.) which shews that I am no party man for the *Gentiles*, in opposition to the *Jews*; and the other was the hospitable well-known *Gaius*. (See the note on *Rom.* xvi. 23.)

15 Left any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

15 I reflect with great pleasure and thankfulness to God, on this circumstance of my ministrations among you; lest, had I personally baptized any considerable number of you, and particularly of those who now, full sore against my will, make me the head of their party, any should have taken occasion from thence to suggest, that I had set up myself, acted by mine own authority, and bound them by that ordinance to acknowledge me for their Master and Lord. A thought which I utterly detest, how much soever some of your new favourite teachers may aim at such a character, and glory in their dominion over your faith and consciences.

16 And I baptized

16 But, (\*) upon farther recollection \*, I must add, that

#### N O T E.

\* As the apostle was not, like our Lord, at all times, and in all cases, under infallible influence, he intimates that he mentioned these facts upon his own memory; and as it was of little moment, whether he were critically exact in the precise number of those whom he had personally baptized, there was

no need of his being under immediate inspiration in reciting it. But since he gave notice that he spoke this barely upon his own memory; and since, as many think, he (chap. vii. 12, 15.) carefully distinguished what he received of the Lord, from what he delivered as his own judgment, who had observed

tized also the household of *Stephanas*: besides I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that

that I did also baptize † the family of *Stephanas*, which were the first fruits of *Achaia*, (chap. xvi. 15.) Besides these, and the two before-mentioned, I don't remember that I ever baptized, at *Corinth*, any other person whatsoever.

17 For though baptizing is included in the powers with which I am intrusted, (*Matth.* xviii. 19.) yet the principal office, for which Christ qualified and commissioned me, as an apostle, was not to spend my time in that sort of service, which might as well be performed by an ordinary minister; but it was to publish the glad tidings of salvation, through him, as a Redeemer, in all its extent and glory, where-ever I come, according to what is made known by revelation to me; And, even in discharging this most important part of my commission, I do it in such a manner, as shews that I have no aim at setting up myself; or of recommending the gospel, by dressing it out with human eloquence, and flowers of rhetoric; or by endeavouring to adjust it to the maxims of philosophy, or to the corrupt notions of high pretenders to reason and learning: No, I have studiously avoided every thing of that kind, lest the native majesty, simplicity, and glory of the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, should be debased, and tarnished by such pompous artificial colours, as are disagreeable to its humbling nature and design; and lest its efficacy should be defeated, either by God's being displeased at this unsuitable way of preaching it, and so withholding his blessing from it; or by a vain conceit, as though its success depends, not on its own naked undisguised evidence and authority, attended with a divine power in the heart and conscience, but on the oratorical and persuasive arts of him that dispenses it.

18 For the plain preaching of salvation through that Jesus, who died an ignominious death, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we might live for ever, is so far from comporting with the preconceived

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joined mercy to be faithful, in letting us know when he was, and when he was not inspired, in what he wrote; we may safely conclude that whenever he gave no such intimation or distinction, what he said was by divine authority and information, which extended to all the truths of the gospel that he was to deliver to the churches. But see the note on chap. vii. 10.

† This is the only place, as far as I find, in all the New Testament, that speaks of baptizing the household, without any notice taken of baptizing the head of the family. It

therefore seems that the household of *Stephanas* were baptized, not on the foot of God's covenant with believers and their seed, as we are naturally led to understand it, when baptizing persons and their households, or all theirs, is mentioned together; but that the family of *Stephanas* were all adult believers, and so were baptized upon their own personal profession of faith in Christ. Accordingly this household, or house of *Stephanas*, are spoken of, (chap. xvi. 15.) as the first-fruits of *Achaia*, and as having added themselves to the majority of the saints.

that perish foolishness: but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

ceived opinions of natural men; that, on the contrary, it is indeed (*μω*) all folly, absurdity, and despicable nonsense, in the account of them that are in a lost and perishing state, in the way to endless perdition; and that living and dying in unbelief, must perish eternally for their rejecting it: But to us, whose eyes are spiritually enlightened, and who are brought into a state of salvation through faith in the cross of Christ, and shall be effectually delivered from the wrath to come, and advanced to heavenly glory by him; this despised doctrine appears to us to be every way worthy of God, as the divine power was illustriously manifested in strengthening and upholding the Saviour under all his atoning sufferings, and in raising him from the dead; in attending the naked preaching of these great truths, with victorious energy upon our souls, to captivate us to the obedience of Christ; and in making them an effectual means, in the hand of the Almighty Spirit, to relieve us under all our weaknesses and discouragements, and to carry us through all opposition and danger, from within and from without, to the inheritance of them that are sanctified, (*Act. xx. 32.*)

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

19 This is a scheme far superior, and even puzzling and confounding, to all the learning of this world; according to what is recorded of the wise men among the *Jews* in former ages, and is applicable to the present dispensation, (*Isa. xxix. 14.*) where God says, I will defeat the contrivances of the most knowing and sagacious men; and will quite baffle and disappoint the inventions and notions of the most learned and rational of mankind, by rendering them all ineffectual to salvation, and by bringing in another method of obtaining it, directly contrary to what they would have imagined.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where

20 This is so amazingly verified and demonstrated, in God's way of giving life to guilty and dead sinners by his crucified Son, that, according to the challenge made in another part of Old Testament prophecy, (*Isa. xxxiii. 18.*) we may summon all the men of pride, and of fame for wisdom and science, among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and say, Where is the learned philosopher among the *Greeks*, who boasts of his wisdom, as superior to all that is known in other nations? Where is the scribe, or learned man and ruler among the *Jews*, who makes the highest pretences to knowledge and judicial power, with respect to the *Mosaic* law, and the traditions of the elders? Where is the man, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*, who delights in speculation and controversy



where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

troverfly, and takes a great deal of pride in disputing, either about questions of the law, or about the nature and reasons of things? Let either, or all of these, produce their schemes; and see whether there be such a sure foundation for a sinner's hope toward God in any of them, as the gospel discovers, and the believer finds, in the propitiatory death and sacrifice of Christ. And what is become of persons of these characters who were famous in their day? Could all their darling notions save them in the eternal state they are gone to? Has not God put a disgrace upon all the wisdom of the men of this world, and shewn their schemes, for appeasing the offended Deity, and reconciling guilty sinners to him, to be vain, foolish, and ineffectual? What have they been able to fix upon, after all their attempts of this sort, that their consciences could rest in, and and be satisfied with? Or could any of them ever have hit upon this wonderful discovery, which God has made in the Gospel, for the pardon and salvation of lost sinners by Jesus Christ? No, far from it:

21 For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

21 For since (*επειδη γαρ*) it was ordered, in the wise disposals of the holy God, that by the displays which are made of his infinite wisdom, and other perfections, in the works of creation and providence \*, and in the notices he gave of himself under former dispensations, the men of this world, by all their own observations and reflections upon them, or by their pretended wisdom in the exercise of their rational faculties, did not attain to such a knowledge of God, as might lead them into just and satisfying sentiments about the way of their salvation; It then pleased God, of his own mere grace, clearly to introduce another scheme, which they never thought of, and which, in the account of unbelievers, that perish, is foolishness, (ver. 18.) and *that* is the plain preaching of a crucified Christ, and of the way of life and happiness alone through him, which God makes effectual to the salvation of all those, who by faith receive him.

22 For the Jews require

22 For, to shew what contempt both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, through the depravity of nature, call on this sort of preaching \*, even the carnal *Jews* themselves, who

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\* Since the apostle keeps his eye upon both *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the preceding and following verses, it seems most congruous to understand him, as doing so in this verse; and therefore I have brought in the notices, that God has given of himself under former dispensations, as well as in the works of creation and providence.

† As the words (*επειδη γαρ*) may justly be rendered *For even*, or *For both*, I have given them an answerable turn in the paraphrase, which, I think, makes a much better and easier connection of this verse with the text, than if, with Mr Locke or Dr Whitby, we were to translate them, *Since also*, or *Since both*: For I own that, according to this construction, I don't

require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom :

who have been favoured with the oracles of God, are so perversely obstinate, that, after all the divine confirmations, which have been given of the gospel, by evident accomplishments of many antient prophecies of the Messiah in our Jesus, and, by various undoubted miracles, they unreasonably insist on having some further and more immediate sign from heaven, just in their own way, and according to their own humour, to make them believe it, (*Matth. xii. 38. and Luke xi. 16.*) And the learned among the *Gentiles*, such as their celebrated *Greek* philosophers, are so conceited of their own abilities, and great attainments in science, that they require an explication and demonstration of his grand article, relating to the way of eternal life, thro' a crucified Jesus, from principles of natural reason, to satisfy them about it.

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ;

23 But we, who are intrusted with its ministry, not regarding any of these corrupt prejudices, proclaim a crucified Christ, and salvation alone through him, with great plainness of speech ; which is indeed (*μὴ σαφὲς λόγος*) an offence to the *Jews*, whose heads are so full of wrong notions about a temporal Saviour, that they cannot tell how to relish, or receive the Redeemer from sin and wrath, who appeared among them in a low state and condition, and was at length brought to the ignominious death of the cross ; but they stumble at him, and fall, to their own perdition, in rejecting him : And our doctrine concerning him is so little calculated to sooth and gratify the pride, curiosity, and carnal reasonings of the *Gentiles*, especially of the politer sort of them, such as the *Greeks*, that they think it all folly, and stupid nonsense, to imagine that a glorious life of immortality and blessedness, should ever be brought to innumerable multitudes of transgressors, through faith in the shameful death of one, who was publicly condemned, and executed as a malefactor.

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the

24 But whatsoever one or the other of these sorts of people think of it, and how much soever they may be offended at, or may despise and ridicule it ; This very doctrine of salvation, through a crucified Jesus appears, and approves itself, to be full of all divine wisdom and power, to them that are effectually called, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles* : They see the infinite power of God, in carrying the Redeemer through his terrible

fulfill-

#### N O T E.

don't see the force of the apostle's reasoning, nor can scarce make sense of it, in this and the three following verses ; nor understand

how, But we preach Christ crucified, &c. answers to since both, or since also the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

the power of God,  
and the wisdom  
of God.

sufferings and death, when he made his soul an offering for sin; and in raising him again from the dead; yea, they see its mighty operation, not only in the numerous miracles that are wrought to confirm all this; but likewise in its happy effects upon themselves, and others, to turn them from their iniquities to God: And they behold adorable *wisdom*, in the constitution of the person of Christ God-man, and in the contrivance of God to secure and exalt the united and harmonious glory of all his attributes, together with the rights of his law and government, in full consistency with the free pardon, justification, and eternal salvation of lost sinners, through the death of his only begotten Son, in their nature, and in their room and stead.

25 Because the  
foolishness of God  
is wiser than men;  
and the weakness  
of God is stronger  
than men.

25 For that, which in the false, blind, and prejudiced opinion of the men of this world, is deemed the greatest folly, with respect to God's way and work, in this method of salvation, infinitely excels the utmost wisdom of all the boasted rational schemes of the most prudent, sagacious, and learned men upon earth: And that which they boldly and impiously censure, as weak and ineffectual to answer its end, especially by such mean instruments as are employed to preach the gospel, is found, by undeniable experience, to be attended with the greatest energy, for destroying the interests of sin and Satan, and making a holy change upon the heart and life, incomparably beyond all that ever was done, or can be pretended to be done, by the power of any natural principles in men, to change their own hearts; or by the most forcible arts of persuasion, or exertions of human authority, to change the hearts of others: And this is brought to pass among such persons, and by such instruments, as may best shew, that the *excellency of the power is of God, and not of man*, (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

26 For ye see  
your calling, bre-  
thren, how that  
not

26 For, my Christian brethren, whether ye be of *Jewish* or *Gentile* extract, ye experimentally know, and may easily observe, what sort of persons they are among you, whom God has effectually called by his grace, to be partakers of all spiritual and saving blessings, thro' a crucified Redeemer \*; and pray take notice how evidently

#### N O T E.

\* Your calling seems plainly to mean their *own* effectual calling; for it refers back to what was said, ver. 24. of Christ's being the *power of God, and the wisdom of God* to them that are called; and, ver. 18. to them that are saved, in opposition to those to whom the preaching of Christ crucified was a *stumbling block* and

*foolishness*, ver. 13. and who are spoken of as *them that perish*, ver. 18. so that they were externally called by the gospel, as well as others; and it could not be said in that respect, that *not many wise men after the flesh*, &c. are called: And it is of the same persons, whose calling is here spoken of, that the ap-  
stle

not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

dently it appears, by undeniable facts, that though there are some men of eminence for natural parts and learning, high station and figure in this world, that are brought under the saving power of gospel grace, to shew that it is not limited to any particular ranks of people, and that the gospel-scheme of salvation is so far from being in itself contemptible and foolish, that the wisest and greatest men on earth may see a surpassing excellence and glory in it, to recommend it to their judgment and choice; yet, in the ordinary course of God's dispensations, he does not make this despised doctrine effectual to the conversion and salvation of any great number of persons of superior rank in this world; not of those, who, like the *Greek* philosophers, are famous for their bright genius, and large compass of literature, and are counted the wisest men of this world; nor of those, who, like the *Jewish* scribes, are men of power and influence; nor of those, who are of high birth and parentage, and, like the *Israelitish* nation, pride themselves in being the descendants of noble ancestors, and look upon all others as the base people of the earth: Not many of either of these sorts of people are savingly called; and the like may be said of those whom God employs, as ministers, in calling them by the gospel.

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and

27 But, on the contrary, God, in his infinitely wise, holy, and sovereign way of procedure, has more generally chosen, as appears by their calling, (2 *Pet.* i. 10.) persons \* of contemptible characters, according to human ways of reckoning: He, in opposition to the *Greek* philosophers, (ver. 20.) has chosen men of mean abilities, as to natural parts and learned accomplishments, who are often despised as fools, especially on account of their embracing Christ and the gospel; he has chosen such as these, (*οὐκ ἰσχυροὶ*) to make the men of learning ashamed of their own schemes, as insufficient to produce the holy and happy effects which are wrought upon these, by means of the doctrines of Christ: And, in opposition to the scribes, (ver. 20.) and

#### NOTES.

He says, ver. 30. *Christ was made unto them wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption*, which cannot be said of any but those that are savingly called. These considerations, together with the propriety of the expression, *your calling*, and the connection in which it stands with the preceding and following verses, shew that the calling here mentioned, relates rather to the persons that were called, than to those that were employed as instruments in calling them. However, as it is probable that the apostle might also have an

oblique view to the character of those that preach the gospel, I have added that sense in the paraphrase. And as the verb (*καλεῖσθαι*) which is rendered *ye see*, is of the *judicative* and *imperative* mood, I have taken in the force of both those significations.

\* As in the foregoing verse the apostle spoke of *persons*; so by *the things*, which he here, and in the next verse, expresses in the neuter gender, in opposition to them, he evidently means *persons* too; and the nature of his argument obliges us so to understand him.

and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

and other men of temporal grandeur and authority, God has chosen persons of low circumstances, and little interest and influence in the world, to make the great ones of the earth ashamed (*iva zaraizoun*) of their pride and folly, and vain attempts against the gospel, while they see its power exemplified in persons, so much inferior in external advantages to themselves; and *that* in defiance of all their power to suppress them.

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

28 And God has chosen persons of mean birth, as to earthly parentage, (*ayim*) and persons that are reckoned the most despicable of all others upon earth, even the *Gentiles* themselves †, who formerly were not his people, and are deemed by the proud *Jews*, as worth nothing at all: he has made choice even of these, that he might abolish. (*iva zaraizoun*) the church state of the *Jews*, and their ancient prerogatives, who all along hitherto have been the peculiar people of God; and who, as they vainly boast, are the only people of true nobility, and in favour with him. He has taken this method, in the dispensations of his grace, to pour contempt upon all these;

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

29 That none who dwell in frail and mortal flesh, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, might have any pretence to glory in their natural parts, learning, and accomplishments, or external privileges of any kind; or to vaunt and extol themselves in the presence of God, whatever they do before men, as if there were any thing in themselves to render them the objects of his favour, or to make them wise to salvation, either by any methods of their own devising, or by any ability in themselves to improve the gospel for that purpose, better than others.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto

30 But, on the contrary, God by a mere act of his own gracious and sovereign will, and not on account of any excellence in yourselves, has chosen and called you (ver. 26, 27.) in Christ, the great Head of the church, and has united you to him, and blessed you with all spiritual blessings of an heavenly nature in him, (*Eph.* i. 3, 4.) who has brought in a complete salvation to us that are effectually called, (ver. 24.); a salvation every way answerable to all our wants, how foolish, weak, base, and despicable soever we be in ourselves,

OR

#### N O T E.

† This seems to be a description of the *Gentiles*, whom the *Jews* always spoke of with the utmost contempt, and used to call, *them that are not*, as in the apocryphal *Esdras* iv. 11. and *Esdras* vi. 56, 57. And the apostle, speaking of the *Gentiles*, *Rom.* iv. 17. says, *God calls these things which be not as though*

*they were.* (See Dr *Whitby's* and Mr *Locke's* notes.) And this is an argument with me, that the apostle here speaks, not merely of God's choosing and calling persons to the ministry, but to the privileges and blessings of the gospel, which the *Gentiles* were made partakers of, to the rejection of the *Jews*.

to us wisdom, and  
righteousness, and  
sanctification, and  
redemption :

or in the opinion of others : Insomuch, that by the ordination of God, and by his settlement of the gospel plan, he has made Christ to be *Wisdom* to us, as he is the great prophet of the church, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for enlightening and guiding us by his word and spirit : God has likewise ordained Christ to be *righteousness* to us, as he is the Lord our righteousness \*, who, by his obedience and sufferings unto death, has satisfied the law and justice in our room and stead ; and as this is accepted for us, and placed to our account, through faith in him, for the remission of our sins, and discharging us from condemnation, and for justifying us in the sight of God, and giving us a right and title to eternal life : and since it does not become the holy God to take away the guilt of our sins, and at the same time leave us under their power and dominion, he has also made Christ to be *sanctification*, as he hath purchased all renewing, quickening, and purifying grace ; and as all the springs of it are in him, to be communicated to us, for making us internally holy, by the agency of his spirit within us : And since, where iniquity is pardoned and subdued, all its dreadful consequences and effects shall in due time be removed, God has made Christ to be *redemption* to us, as he is our great and final deliverer from all that is contemptible and miserable in this world †, as well as in that to come ; and as he will raise our dead bodies, and make them like unto his own glorious body, by the working of his mighty power, and so complete our felicity, on the foot of that eternal redemption which he has obtained for us.

31 The

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† *Righteousness* and *sanctification* are evidently distinguished from each other; and therefore the *righteousness*, here mentioned, cannot relate to our being made internally and practically holy, which is the proper idea of *sanctification* ; but it relates to another benefit, and that is *justification* by the righteousness of Christ. To suppose otherwise, is to confound justification and sanctification, and to make a wide gap in the apostle's account of the blessings brought in by Christ, to the exclusion of pardon and justification, which are fundamental to all the rest : But the paraphrase keeps up a distinction between all the benefits; and though Christ is made *wisdom* and *sanctification*, by the gracious working of his spirit in us, that is no argument against his being made *righteousness* to us by imputation; for his being made re-

demption to us is in a different way from that in which he is made *wisdom* and *sanctification*, as the former is by an external work done for us, and upon us, rather than by an internal work wrought in us.

‡ *Redemption*, in the language of the New Testament, often signifies deliverance from sin and wrath by the price which Christ paid for it. But this sense of his being made *redemption*, falls in with his being made *righteousness* to us; and therefore as it is here to be distinguished from that, we are led to understand it of *redemption by power*, in virtue of the price, from all the evils of this life, as in *1. Cor. xxi. 28.* and of the *redemption of the body*, for the consummation of our happiness, at the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, which the apostle speaks of, *Rom. viii. 23.*

31. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

31 The great design of God in thus providing all salvation in Christ, is, that according to the governing view of the gospel-scheme, and according to what is recorded (*Jer. ix. 23, 24.*) for placing God and creatures, especially sinful creatures, in their proper situations, every one that triumphs and rejoices, on account of the honours and blessings conferred upon him, should center all his glorying and rejoicing entirely and only in the Lord Jesus, and in the free grace of God the Father through him, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what intire satisfaction may we receive the apostolic writings and doctrine, as of divine authority! With what reverence of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, should we ask for grace and peace to be extended to all the churches, which consist of credibly professing saints, and to all that religiously call on the name of Christ, their Lord and ours! And with what pleasure and thankfulness to God, should we reflect on the gifts and graces that he has bestowed upon them, as being confident that they, who are effectually called into communion with Christ, shall be confirmed in their present happy state, and be presented faultless before him, at his second coming! 'Tis great pity that they, who profess to be united in these spiritual privileges and eternal interests, should not be so in all important sentiments, and in heart and affection too; and it is an exceeding reproach upon them, when animosities and contentions arise among them; some setting up one head of a party, and others another, as though these had been their redeemers, and they had been baptized in their names; and as though all Christ's faithful servants were not embarked in his common cause. But, O what a comfort is it, if we are conscious to ourselves, that we have not encouraged, nor contributed to such mischievous divisions, like persons that would set up our own, or any other name, instead of Christ's! He is certainly worthy of our highest and dearest regards, when we consider him as crucified for us; and how much soever the doctrine of salvation, through his sufferings and death, may be a stumbling block to the Jews, and the greatest folly in the esteem of learned Gentiles, to their own perdition; it is nevertheless in itself, and in the account of all the effectually called, who believe, and are in a state of salvation, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. And what is all the wisdom of the most learned and celebrated rabbies and philosophers, but very foolishness, compared with the wisdom of God, as displayed in the cross of Christ, for reconciling his mercy and justice in saving sinners, which no human schemes could ever do! How weak and ineffectual are all the contrivances and attempts of the most penetrating minds, for reformation and happiness, compared with the divine energy that accompanies the plain and faithful preaching of a crucified Saviour! But how unlike to men's ways of proceeding are the dispensations of God's grace, who, for the most part, has chosen and called persons of despicable characters, and of the lower ranks of mankind; both to preach, and to receive Christ and the gospel, and thereby pour confusion upon all the learning and authority of men, that no flesh might glory in his presence, as though their improvements of divine revelation, to saving advantage, were owing to themselves! And how readily should we fall in with the gospel scheme, which is so admirably contrived for humbling the creature, and exalting God, as he has laid up all salvation in Christ, and made him to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to all that believe in him, that every one, who glories, might glory only in the Lord.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle proceeds to remind the Corinthians of the plain manner in which he preached a crucified Christ to them, 1,—5. Shews the excellent wisdom contained in this doctrine, 6,—9. And that it cannot be duly known and received, but by the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, 10,—16.*

## TEXT.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

## PARAPHRASE.

SINCE the wisdom and power of God, together with all his other perfections, are conspicuously displayed, and the whole of salvation is provided in Christ, to the glory of God, and the humbling of sinful creatures at his footstool, (chap. i. 24, 29, 30, 31.); therefore, my dear brethren, when I came and preached the gospel to you, I did not address you, as your false teachers do, to gain applause to themselves with flights of eloquence, (*καὶ ὑπερχυὲν λόγῳ*) in a fine rhetorical harangue, or with curious speculations of human wisdom and philosophy, which are of high repute with the polite part of the world; but I purposely declined every thing of this nature, as unsuitable to the dignity, simplicity, and self-humbling tendency of my message, in which I declared to you that testimony, which is originally not of men, but of God himself, and which he has given to his crucified Son, by antient prophecy, and numerous miracles, and by the inward witness of his Spirit, to the consciences of them that believe.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

2 For as I myself count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and would glory above all things else, in the cross of Christ, (*Phil. iii. 8. and Gal. vi. 14.*) so upon mature deliberation, (*ἐξέτιμα*) I judged it needful, and accordingly resolved to preach among you, as if I knew nothing of the arts and sciences, or of the *Jewish* or *Grecian* learning, or even of the most sublime and unessential points of faith; but to employ all the talents which God has given me, to make known, and propagate among you, nothing so much as, nothing in comparison with, and nothing as the sum and substance of the gospel, but the person and offices of Jesus Christ, the complete salvation that is in him, and the strong and endearing obligations he has laid on all that by faith receive him: And I especially determined to explain and prove, recommend and inculcate, the fundamental article of his expiatory sufferings and death on the cross, in which all the lines of the gospel meet, as in their center.

3 And



3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

3 And whilst I was dispensing these important truths, I behaved with all meekness and modesty; and appeared among you as a poor weak creature, whose outward circumstances were afflicted and despicable, (chap. iv. 10,—13.) and whose bodily presence was mean, and speech contemptible, (2 Cor. x. 10.) I was also among you with great fear, lest through your strong prejudices against me, and violent opposition to me and my ministry, on these accounts, my mouth should be stopped, and my labour with you should have no good effect upon you, (Acts xviii. 5.) and I was filled with a deep concern for the salvation of your souls, even unto trembling in my heart for fear, lest, through the infirmity of the instrument, the depravity of your own hearts, and the power of Satan, ye should reject and despise my message itself, to your own eternal perdition. In this manner I was *serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations*, as in other places, (Acts xx. 19.) so especially at my first coming among you, till the Lord Jesus appeared and spoke to me in a vision, saying, *Be not afraid; but speak and bold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city*, (Acts xviii. 9, 10.)

4 And my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

4 Upon this encouragement, *I continued with you a year and six months, teaching the word of God*, (Acts xviii. 11.) as being assured, that Christ's presence with me would amply make up the want of external recommendations in my person and manner of preaching; and that the doctrine of his cross, when duly understood, and impressed by his Spirit, would speak for itself, and not need the flourishes and ornaments of language to set it off, and make it effectual; and therefore the manner of my private discourses, and public ministrations among you, were in a holy, free, and negligent style, not with the oratorical allurements, which the art and skill of men invented to imbellish their speeches, and add force to them, that they might tickle the ear, please the fancy, and captivate the mind of the hearer: But my words were attended with what is infinitely better, and more prevalent, than all this, even with the convincing light and persuasive evidence of the Holy Spirit himself in your own minds and consciences; and with his powerful influence upon your hearts, to bring them into an obediential subjection to it\*, as well as that the truth of

what

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As innumerable multitudes were not convinced, and brought to embrace the gospel.

what I delivered was confirmed by the miraculous gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost. And I designedly went into this plain way of preaching.

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

5 That the faith, whereby ye assented to, and embraced the gospel, and trusted in Christ according to it, might not be supposed to be wrought in you by the dint of human motives and arguments, nor might rest upon the authority and persuasive arts of men, which they think to be the wisest methods for gaining credit to what they say; but that, like a truly divine faith, it might be built merely upon the authority of God, and might be entirely owing to his efficacious working, who makes the gospel *his power to the salvation of every one that believes*, (Rom. i. 16.) and that the glory of all might be ascribed, not in the least to man, but intirely and alone to God, who produces mighty effects by the weakest means and instruments.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not

6 Though we, who minister the gospel of Christ, don't dress it out with the flowers of human eloquence, (ver. 1.) and though it be deemed foolishness by many, (chap. i. 23) yet we therein preach the grand scheme of divine contrivance, which, of all others, displays the manifold wisdom of God, (Eph. iii. 10.) and is suited, designed, and blessed, to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in a crucified Saviour; and so it is accounted of by those that believe, and are effectually called, (chap. i. 21, 24.) and especially (*οἱ τοιοῦτοι*) among those of them †, who, through the illumination

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pick. by the unquestionable miracles which they saw were wrought to confirm it, an internal light and energy in the souls of them that believed was, at least, included in this *demonstration of the Spirit and power*; and without this, all miracles themselves would have been as ineffectual, for the conversion of these *Corinthians*, as they were of others, that still continued in unbelief.

† By *them that are perfect*, cannot be meant them that are intirely free from all defects in knowledge, grace, and holiness: For as the apostle owned that he himself was not, in this sense, perfect, Phil. iii. 12. it is not to be supposed, that he looked upon other Christians to be so; nay, he supposes the contrary in this epistle, chap. xiii. 10; where comparing the *present* with the *heavenly* state, he says, *If then that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*. But *he that is perfect*, is of much the same import with *him that is spiritual*, in chap. iii. 1.—3, where it stands opposed to them that are comparatively *babes in Christ*, which need to be fed with milk, and are in great measure carnal.

Accordingly, in opposition to such babes, the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks of them that are of full age, or perfect, (*τελειοι*) and of *leaving the principles*, or first rudiments of the doctrine of Christ, and going on to *perfection*, that is, to a more thorough knowledge of the whole scheme of the gospel, like *finished* Christians; as we use to call good scholars and workmen, *finished* scholars and workmen, (Heb. v. 13, 14. and vi. 1.) Accordingly, *as many as be perfect*, (Phil. iii. 12.) signifies, as many as be advanced to any considerable attainment of knowledge and experience, and answerable improvements in grace and holiness, and so are arrived at a state of manhood in Christ, Eph. iv. 13, 14. Therefore, though in some senses every true believer may be said to be perfect, as he is *complete in Christ*, his Head, Col. ii. 10. and is already perfectly justified through faith in him, Acts xiii. 39. and Rom. viii. 1. and as he has all the parts of the new creature formed in him, 1 Cor. v. 17. yet, in the apostle's use of this phrase, it seems to signify persons of more grown understanding, and higher attain-

not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought.

tion of the Holy Spirit, have, like finished Christians, attained any considerable degree of knowledge and grace in their acquaintance with it. Nevertheless, the doctrine we preach is neither such, as is invented, suggested, or approved of, by the philosophical or political schemes of the men of this world, whose thoughts about a better are all trifling and vain; nor of the *Jewish* rulers and *Rabbies*, any more than of heathen potentates, whose views and interests relate to this present life; all which wisdom of theirs will soon perish with themselves.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

7. But we publish that blessed doctrine, which is the wonderful product of the infinite wisdom of God, and has been hitherto entirely concealed from the *Gentile* world, and but obscurely suggested to the *Jews* \*, and is too deep and unsearchable to be fully comprehended by any creature upon earth, yea, by the angels themselves in heaven, who are continually prying into it, (1 *Pet.* i. 12:) and is too spiritual to be duly understood, and received by carnal minds, (ver. 14.) I mean that wisdom which was a secret reserve in God's breast from everlasting, and was hid under *Jewish* types and shadows, and mysterious dawning hints of prophecy, in the Old Testament dispensations; but which God, (*τῷ τῷ αἰῶνι*) before all ages of time, or any former dispensation commenced, predetermined to reveal in our days, with transcendent light and evidence, for the honour of the gospel-state, and of its ministrations and subjects; and for the eternal happiness and glory of every one of us, that are sincere lovers of God, (ver. 9.)

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew:

8 Which important scheme of salvation none of the great men of this world, particularly not *Pontius Pilate*, the Roman governor, nor *Annas*, nor *Caiaphas*, the high priests, nor any of the *chief priests*, *rabbies*, and rulers of the *Jews* †, had any just notions of; their prejudices

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attainments in Christianity, who are enriched with all knowledge, (chap. i. 5.) and who, compared with weaker and younger believers, that do not see so far into the beauty and glory of the whole scheme of the gospel, may be said to be perfect, as a man is, when compared with a child.

\* *The Wisdom of God in a mystery*, may signify the incomprehensible things contained in it, as well as former concealments of it. And I cannot think that it here relates merely to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which some suppose is the only mystery that the apostle so frequently speaks of: but it seems principally to refer to the great doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ: For it is this, and not

barely the calling of the *Gentiles*, concerning which the apostle says, ver. 8. *Had the princes of this world*, inclusive at least of the *Jewish* rulers, known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: whereas, had the rulers among the *Jews* known Christ's design of calling the *Gentiles*, this would rather have still more incensed them against him, than restrained them from crucifying him.

† *The princes of this world* plainly mean those that were immediately concerned in the crucifixion of Christ; and to take in the *Jewish* rulers, priests, and rabbies, who intrigued and joined with *Them*, in putting our Lord to death.

for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord at glory.

prejudices and carnal views having blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts against all the means of conviction that Christ afforded them: For had they really understood, and been persuaded in their own consciences, what a divine person he was, and what a wise and gracious design he came upon, they would not have dared to be so desperately wicked, as to *take counsel together against him*, (Psal. ii. 2.) and unite in putting him to the shameful death of the cross, who is indeed the Lord, Proprietor, and Possessor of glory \*, all glorious in his original nature and perfections, and the Author, Purchaser, and Disposer of all the glory of the gospel, and of heaven itself.

9 But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,

9 But, notwithstanding all their low and mistaken thoughts about him, he has brought in a most glorious state of things, worthy of himself, according to what is written by the prophet *Isaiah*, (chap. lxiv. 4.) where he describes the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, saying, Among all the objects of sense, the eye has never seen any thing so grand and beautiful; nor has the ear heard any thing so delightful and advantageous; and among all the objects of science, it never entered the thoughts of any man to contrive, or even to imagine or apprehend, much less comprehend, any thing so entertaining, beneficial, and glorious, as the blessings of salvation, which God, in the astonishing counsels and settlements of his infinite wisdom and grace, has provided, adjusted, and secured for, and under the gospel dispensation, will bestow upon them, who, from a sense of his matchless love herein, sincerely desire, prefer, and delight in him, above all things else, as those that are by faith and hope waiting for him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit

10 But God has now made a clear revelation of these glorious things, not to me only by immediate inspiration, that I might *preach the unspeakable riches of Christ*; but likewise by the gracious internal illumination of his Spirit, by means of, and together with, his word, to all those of us who love him, and for whom he has prepared them, (ver. 9.) that we might know the

#### N O T E.

† The King of glory is a magnificent and peculiar description of the great Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, Psal. xxiv. 7.—10. Christ therefore is here spoken of under the august title of the Lord of glory, to raise our thoughts of his infinite dignity, as a divine person, in like manner as God the Father is styled the Father of glory, (Eph. i. 17) and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of glory, (1 Pet. iv. 14.) The application of this title glory to all the

holy Three, intimates, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the God of glory, as the only true God is called, Psal. xxix. 3 and Acts vii. 2. and Christ's being mentioned under this character of Divinity, when he is spoken of as crucified, shows that the divine and human natures were personally united in him; and that his death is of infinite dignity and merit, as he was God, who purchased the church with his own blood, (Acts xx. 28.)

*Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

the things which are freely given to us of God, (ver. 12.): For as the Lord is said to *search the hearts and reins of the children of men*, (1 Chron. xxviii. 9. and Rev. ii. 23.) to intimate his perfect knowledge of them; so his Spirit, who is one of them, and is given to make known the great things of the gospel to us, is infinite in understanding, and has not only an all-comprehending view of every thing whatsoever out of God; but is intimately acquainted even with the deepest counsels and secrets, as they lie in God himself; and so he, and he only, in opposition to all creatures, can make them known in such ways, and by such means, as seem good unto him.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

11 For, to illustrate this point, as far as may be, by what we are most familiarly acquainted with, What man, in the ordinary course of human knowledge, can be acquainted with the secret thoughts and designs that lie in any one's own heart; except his own self-conscious mind, which reflects on all that passes within him, and which only can discover it to another man? Even so it is, with respect to the still more sublime and hidden secrets of wisdom and grace, that are formed in the heart of God about those that love him: Neither angels nor men, no one whatsoever (*what*) can penetrate into them, or get any knowledge of them, as they lie in the eternal thoughts of God; except in distinction from all finite beings, his own Spirit\*, who is as essential to himself, and as conscious to all his thoughts and purposes, as any man's own soul can be to him, and to the thoughts which pass within him.

12 Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit

12 Now, in order to our being led into the knowledge of these important and concerning things, we are under the conduct and influence, not of that spirit of the boasted wisdom and learning, which the men of this world are animated and guided by, and pride themselves in: No, all the powers and principles of this sort of spirit are too low, weak, and carnal, to make any discoveries of them; and they stand

in

#### NOTE.

\* The Spirit's *searching all things, even the deep things of God*, ver. 10. is a peculiar property of Deity; and his *knowing the things of God*, as the Spirit of man knows the things of his own mind, ver. 11. intimates that he is as essential to the being of God, as the human soul is to the being of man: and both together shew, that the Spirit is included in the divine unity, and partakes of the nature and perfections of God: And yet his being the Spirit which is of God, ver. 12. suggest, that he has, in some unknown way, a sub-

sistence distinct from the Father's and Son's, in the undivided Godhead: And when it is said, that *none knows the things of God but the Spirit of God*, it is only to exclude all creatures, of what rank soever, from this knowledge; but no more excludes the Father and Son from it, than our Lord excluded the Father and Spirit from equal knowledge with himself, when he said, (Matth. xi. 27.) *No man (what man) knows the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

in opposition to them, instead of being disposed to entertain them: But we have been made partakers of that divine Spirit, and have been enlightened, taught, and animated by him, who, in his personal subsistence, proceeds by an eternal necessity, and in his operations and influence comes forth, by peculiar dispensation from God to us, for this very end and purpose, that we might have a true and saving knowledge of those great and glorious blessings of the gospel, which God has bestowed upon us, not for any worthiness or desert in ourselves, or any acquirements of our own, but merely by the free gift of his own rich grace to us:

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

13 Which excellent things we also, who are taught to know them, and *that* for ourselves; and particularly we, the apostles of Christ, speak of, as has been said, (ver. 4.) not in rhetorical language, which is studied and learned by human art, and would be but like gilding a diamond, or lackering over the finest gold, to the debasing of its own lustre and value; but we express them in a plain, inartificial, though grave and majestic style, suitable to their native dignity and beauty, which the Spirit of God instructs us to clothe them with: And, in representing them, we compare what he has said about them, in former and latter revelations, in types and antitypes, and in prophecies and accomplishments of them, which cast a light one upon another; and we express them in the Spirit's own language, as contained in the sacred oracles; *that* being best adapted to impress, as well as convey just ideas of the things, which he himself has indited.

14 But the natural man receiveth

14 But though these spiritual things, which are revealed by the Holy Ghost, be set in the clearest objective light before an unregenerate man, who acts only upon principles of natural reason, in his judgment about them\*, like the *Greeks* and *wise men after the flesh*, before mentioned, (chap. i. 23, 26.) yet he don't embrace and approve of them; because, through the darkness, pride, sensuality, and depravity of his mind, he

#### N O T E.

\* After all the disputes that have been raised about what is here meant by the *natural man*, I humbly think a close attention to the apostle's own discourse may be sufficient to determine it; for *they are foolishness to him*, seems plainly to answer to the polite *Greeks*, to whom the *preaching of Christ crucified was foolishness*, (see the note on chap. i. 23.) And *he cannot know them*, seems to answer to the *princes of this world*, inclusive of the *Jewish rulers*, *not knowing the Lord of glory*, (see the note on ver. 8.) And so the *natural man* is one, who, though the doctrines of the gos-

pel be ever so clearly published, and proposed to his examination, as they now were to *Jews and Greeks*; and though he have all the learning of the *Greeks*, and all the advantages of *Jewish rabbies*, who made great professions of religion, and whose business it was to study the Holy Scriptures; yet having only natural principles of reason, with its utmost improvements by external means, to guide and influence him in his enquiries into divine revelation, he can neither know its doctrines aright, in their amiable glories, nor be suitably affected with them.

eth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

he cannot adjust them to his own reasonings about them, and thinks them a mere heap of inconsistencies, weakness, folly, and enthusiasm, beneath the notice of a man of sense and learning: And though he has heard them with the hearing of the ear, like the *Scribes* and *Rabbies*, and other chiefs of this world, that joined in crucifying the Lord of glory, (ver. 8.) yet, thro' the corruption of nature, he is under a moral incapacity of understanding them, in a truly spiritual and affecting manner, suitable to their high worth and importance, for want of a renewed faculty, or supernatural principle within him, to discern them; because they are perceived in their divine truth and spirituality, excellence and glory, only by an understanding that is illuminated and rectified by the Spirit of God.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

15 But a real Christian, who is renewed in the spirit of his mind \*, and led into an acquaintance with divine things by the Holy Spirit, (*ἀναγενομενος*) searches into, discerns, and is capable of forming a right judgment about all things that are necessary to be known, relating to God's way of salvation by Jesus Christ: He can distinguish truth from error in such important points, sees a glory, and feels a transforming power in them: But (*οὐκ*) he himself, as to his spiritual knowledge and sense of the things of the gospel, and satisfaction in them, (*οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναγνωσκόμενος*) is not discerned, or certainly judged of, nor can be confuted, by any man whatsoever, much less by those that are destitute of the Spirit, and have no experience of these things; nor are capable of determining the truth or falshood of what the believer knows and says, according to the Scripture, about them.

16 For who hath known the mind

16 For what natural man, by all his reason, though  
so

#### N O T E.

\* He that is spiritual (*ο ἀναγεννημένος*) being opposed to one, who, in the next preceding verse, is called (*ὁ φυσικὸς ἄνθρωπος*) the natural man, (who has no higher principle than his own unrenewed sense, to guide him, and to whom the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness, seems to answer to them that are effectually called, and to whom Christ crucified is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, in opposition to those to whom he is a stumbling block, and foolishness, (chap. i. 23. 24.) and so he that is spiritual is here the regenerate man; though, perhaps, it may also point to one of superior knowledge and grace, as it more apparently doth in chap. in. 1. where the apostle tells these *Corinthians*, he could not speak unto them, as unto spiritual, (*οὐκ ἔμισην*

*τιμωρ*) but as unto carnal, (*οὐκ ὡς σαρκικός*) and as unto babes in Christ: He there seems to mean by them that are spiritual, such as had attained to some considerable degrees of light, faith, and holiness, according to the gospel revelation, in opposition, not to those whom he here had called natural men, (ver. 14) but to those that were comparatively carnal, as being too much influenced by worldly interests and corrupt affections, in their regard to the doctrines of the gospel; (see the note on chap. iii. 1.) And as, in that place, he manifestly speaks of private Christians; so here, he that is spiritual, is not to be understood as relating only to ministers, but likewise to common believers.

mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

improved to the highest pitch imaginable, has ever penetrated into the secret thoughts and counsels of God's heart, which are merely matters of divine revelation, so as to be able to shew the spiritual man \* any of those supernatural truths that he is not already acquainted with, or to convince him of any mistakes about those that God has made known to him? Who of them all shall undertake to demonstrate (*συμβάλλειν*) any thing for, or against what he affirms concerning them? But we apostles, and all of us, who are now *light in the Lord*, (Eph. v. 8.) are fully satisfied, that we are led into the true knowledge of the mind of Christ, concerning the great things that relate to the glory of God, and our own eternal salvation, through his crucified Son: And therefore no schemes of other men, that are contrary to this, ought to be entertained by any of you, with whatever high pretences of authority, or of natural reason, they may be recommended by men of name and figure among you.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Behold the native beauties of the gospel, which is indeed God's own testimony, and appears best in its own light and language! All its lines center in a crucified Christ, whose sacrifice is of infinite value, as he is the Lord of glory; and the gaudy false paint of human oratory is so far from setting off this important doctrine with advantage, that it obscures the illustrious simplicity, and divine wisdom and grace, which are its highest recommendation: But so great is its spirituality and sublimity, and so far is it from comporting with the most refined schemes of the men of this world, that it exceeds all human thought; it can neither be found out by natural reason, nor spiritually understood and relished by unrenewed minds, which, instead of cordially embracing it, count it foolishness. How necessary then is, not only an external revelation, but also an internal illumination of the Holy Spirit, who, being a divine person, is as intimately acquainted with the deep things of God, as a man's soul is with the thoughts of his own mind; and who alone can give us just and impressive conceptions of spiritual things! But blessed be God, that true believers, whose faith is produced and maintained, not by the wisdom of men, but by the power of God, and who sincerely love him, are partakers of his Spirit, to lead them into all necessary truth, and to give them a right discerning of it in a spiritual manner, that they may savingly know those great and inexpressibly glorious things which God has prepared for them, and freely given to them; and may be capable of distinguishing gospel truths from the errors that lie in opposition to them. And, O what admirable contrivance, for the glory of God, and their own salvation, do finished Christians discern in it, who have a more complete view of the gospel scheme! While they have the greatest satisfaction, experience, and hope in themselves, relating to it, no natural man is able to correct or confute them.

#### N O T E.

\* *Him*, as several learned commentators observe, refers not to the Lord, but to the spiritual man, mentioned in the foregoing verse: For the apostle is here speaking, not of a natural man's instructing the Lord, but of his judging, confuting, and better informing the spiritual man, with respect to the things which he knows by divine revelation, in such a manner, as to be judged of no man.



## C H A P. III.

*The apostle reproves the Corinthians for their carnality and contentions about ministers, 1,--4. Shews that all the true servants of Christ can indeed do nothing effectually without him, that they preach him as the only foundation, and every one should take heed to what he builds on this foundation, 5,--15. That the churches of Christ ought to be kept pure, as they are the temple of the Holy Ghost, 16, 17. That it becomes them to be humble in their opinion of themselves, 18,--20. And that they should not glory in men; because, through Christ, ministers and all things else are theirs, 21,--23.*

## TEXT.

AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

## PARAPHRASE.

AND truly, my brethren, even whilst I was with you, I perceived such appearances of fondness for secular interells, and for philosophical learning; and so much of an opinionated and disputatious temper, that though many of you are enriched in all utterance, and in all necessary knowledge, (see the note on chap. i. 5.) yet I could not look upon the generality of you, or treat you in my ministry, as persons advanced very far, but rather as weak and low in spiritual light and experience; and though I esteem you as real believers, and so own and love you as brethren in the Lord \*, yet I could judge no higher of you, nor accommodate my discourses any otherwise to you, than as to babes in Christ, who, for spiritual strength and understanding, were but like young children compared with men of full age.

2 Accordingly, I made it my chief care to lead you into the first principles of the oracles of God, relating to Jesus Christ, and him crucified, which, like milk for children, were best suited to your spiritual edification, instead of entertaining you with the more abstruse and sublime points of the Christian faith, which might have fed your pride and vanity, and are like

*strong*

## N O T E.

\* The apostle's calling these *Corinthians* brethren, and babes in Christ, shews that when he spoke of them, as not being spiritual, but carnal, he did not mean it absolutely, as if he thought them to be unregenerate persons, but only comparatively, as they were Christians of lower attainments in experimental knowledge and grace, and more influenced by fleshly principles, than some other believers were, and then they themselves might reasonably have been expected to be, considering what means they had enjoyed; (see the note on chap. ii. 15.) And as he had before spoken of them under the character of the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and of those, whom

God would confirm to the end, that they might be blameless in the day of the Lord Jesus, and to whom Christ was made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. (chap. i. 2, 8, 30.) we must conclude that, in the judgment of charity, he accounted the bulk of them to be real Christians, notwithstanding all their defects, which he expressed by their being carnal, and babes, and which seemed to lie chiefly in their paying too much regard to men, and to principles of human policy and literature, to the obstrusting of their proficiency in the most sublime, refined, and practical knowledge of spiritual things.

meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

*strong meat*, that is properest for men of full age, who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, (Heb. v. 12,—14.) For ye were not then in fit case to receive, and make a good improvement of such spiritual and lofty themes; nor indeed have ye as yet, after all the advantages ye have enjoyed, made such proficiency in divine knowledge, and in victory over remaining corruptions, as to embrace such doctrines without turning them to a wrong use, any more than the weak stomach of an infant can digest strong meat.

3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

3. For, as I find by your present conduct, there is still a great deal of carnality of temper, and childish ways of thinking about the doctrines of the gospel, as though they were not to be received, merely as matters of divine revelation, but upon the authority and credit of one or another man of note and fame, that recommends them to you: Since (1st. 74) there are among you vain emulations and envyings, on account of the spiritual gifts which some are apprehended to be endued with, more than others; and these inward ferments of the passions break out into open quarrels and litigious contentions, and are carried on to factions and parties, for and against certain doctrines and ministers; Are not these *the works of the flesh*? (Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.) Are not these manifest proofs, that ye are not so spiritual and disinterested in your regards to gospel truths as ye ought to be; and that ye behave too much under the influence of a carnal disposition of mind, like the men of this world, who have no better than natural principles to govern them?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollas, are ye not carnal?

4 For as I have observed already, (chap. i. 12.) one sort of you set up for one minister, and others for another, as though they were to be the heads of parties, and Lords of your faith. One, for instance, saying, I am all for *Paul*, as thinking him to be the most solid and profound preacher; and another, I am all for *Apollas*, as admiring him for the most lively and florid orator. Is not this a plain evidence of great remains of carnality among you?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollas, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as

5 To cure you of this, permit me to ask you, Who do you take *Paul* to be? And what do ye make of *Apollas*? Or what in reality is one, or the other of these? Are they more or less than the servants of Christ, by whose preaching, one and the same doctrine, ye were brought to believe, and depend by faith upon him; not by any skill or power in them, but merely as

as the Lord gave  
to every man?

6 I have plant-  
ed, Apollos wa-  
tered: but God  
gave the increase.

the Lord Christ himself wrought effectually, by their ministry, in the hearts of every one of you, that doth indeed believe in him? Why then should either of them, or any other minister, be set up one against another, or be looked upon as any thing more than subordinate instruments of your spiritual benefit?

6 I Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, (*chap. i. 1.*) to speak under the figure of a labourer in a vineyard, which both the Old and New Testament church is compared to, (*Isa. v. 1, &c. and Matth. xx. 1, &c. and xxi. 33, &c.*) I was the first that preached the gospel to you, which I did with assiduous care, for a year and a half together; and, blessed be God, I was an instrument of converting many of you to the faith of Christ, (*Acts xviii. 1—11.*); and so, as an under agent to him, I planted, not only his gospel, but likewise trees of righteousness, by our conversion, that he might be glorified. (*Isa. lxi. 3.*) When Providence called me away from you, my companion in labour, who came after me, even Apollos, a lively, zealous, and eloquent young man, took great pains in helping them much, which had believed through grace, (*Acts xviii. 27. and xix. 1.*); and so was like one, who watered the plantation. But as a tree's taking root, thriving, and bringing forth fruit, depends intirely on the operation of the God of nature, both in forming the plant, and the soil in which it is set, and in adding the influence of the heavens: So the success of the gospel absolutely depends on the special operation of the God of grace, who is the Author of the gospel itself, and attends the ministrations of it with the power of his Spirit, to make new hearts, and cause them to abound in fruits of holiness; insomuch that the whole increase, which is produced by our labour, whether it be of converts, or of their gifts and graces, and fruits of righteousness, is derived only from him.

7 So then, nei-  
ther is he that  
ploweth any  
thing, neither he  
that

7 So then, as in the world of nature, neither the husbandman, that plants and waters, has any power in himself, or by virtue of what he can do, to accomplish the desired end; but all is owing to the supreme agency of that God, who at first formed the earth, and made it bring forth its various kinds of plants, and who, in the way of his providence, cherishes and improves them, by causing the sun to shine, and the rain and dew to fall upon them: After the like manner, in the world of grace, neither he who, like Paul, laid the foundation of Christianity, is of any consideration, as to the power and efficacy of his ministry; nor is he who, like Apollos, went on in preaching the gospel to cultivate the good

that watereth :  
but God that giv-  
eth the increase.

good work, which was begun in you, of any account, as to the happy fruit of his labours, how skilful, fervent, and diligent soever, either of them were therein : But God alone, who authorized and qualified both for their work, and assisted, owned, and blessed them in it, is the supreme efficient cause of all the good produced by it, in virtue of the enlivening and cherishing beams of the sun of righteousness, (*Mal. iv. 2.*) and of the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Spirit : (*Tit. iii. 5, 6.*) the glory therefore of all is to be ascribed to him, and not in the least to any of us, who are what we are by the grace of God, and are to be looked upon, as barely ministers, and not Authors of either the gospel, or of its efficacy upon you.

8 Now he that  
planteth, and he  
that watereth are  
one : and every  
man shall receive  
his own reward,  
according to his  
own labour.

8 One servant of the Lord, who takes pains in first publishing the word of his grace, and bringing souls to him ; and another fellow labourer, who afterwards comes, and lays himself out in further ministrations, are all one, in their doctrine and main design, in the authority of their commission from Christ, and instrumentality in his hand for conversion and edification ; and are all one, in their nothingness, as to saving events ; so that, with respect to these things, one of them is not to be esteemed and magnified above the other, much less in opposition to the other : And, as to the difference there may be in their gifts and diligence, every one of them, who is faithful in either of these services, shall receive from his great Lord and Master at last, not the retribution which belongs to another man's labours, and which, though altogether a free and undeserved gift, may be styled a *reward*, because it is bestowed, not for the work, but after it is done, and will make a rich amends for all the toil and difficulty of doing it ; but he shall receive the reward, which is suitable to the nature and proportion of his own ministerial labours, and of his fidelity, zeal, and diligence in it : Such an one therefore may be thoroughly satisfied with this final reward, which will be as happy and glorious, as he can wish for ; and he need not be ambitious, as some among you are, of the praise and honour that come from men only.

9 For we are  
labourers together  
with God : ye  
are

9 For as to us, who are engaged in these important services, we are to be equally considered as those, who, by divine assistance, labour jointly, and with the same noble view, as God's workmen, in a subordinate concurrence with him, who will never leave us in his work, nor be unmindful of us after it ; this is honour enough for us : And as to you, who are his church and  
people,

are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

people, ye are not ours, but God's own vineyard, field, or garden, (*ἡ οἰκουμένη*) the work of his own hand, and his peculiar property, on which much cost and pains have been spent for its cultivation: And, to use another metaphor taken from a *house*, which is also an apt representation of the church of God, (*1 Tim. iii. 15.*) ye are his structure, not of our own erecting, nor for our use, but which he himself has built for his own habitation through the spirit, (*Eph. ii. 22.*) instead of that material temple, in which he was formerly wont to dwell; and so in each of these views, whoever were the means and instruments, ye are his *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, (*Eph. ii. 10.*) and therefore ye ought to be as a dedicated thing, not at all to us, but intirely and alone to him.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

10 In this spiritual building, which God has set up among you, I had the honour of being first employed; and as a skilful and prudent architect looks well to the foundation he lays, and takes care that it be firm and solid, and sufficient to bear the edifice, which is designed to be raised upon it; so according to the nature of my office, and the measure of gifts and graces bestowed upon me, I have made use of all the wisdom, with which God inspired me, in carefully laying the ground work of your faith and hope, and of all your safety and comfort, in the great doctrine of a crucified Jesus, and salvation alone by him; and succeeding ministers, like *Apollon*, have taken pains for your further instruction and edification upon this foundation. But let every one, that would be employed in raising a good superstructure, take special care what sort of doctrines and practices he builds upon it, and see that they be indeed placed upon this, as their foundation, and be thoroughly consistent with it, and worthy of it; that the whole building may be all of a piece, for the glory of God, and the good of others, as well as of his own soul.

11 For other foundation can no man lay, than that

11 For as to the *foundation* itself, on which the whole church, and all its doctrines and duties, ministrations and hopes, preservation, privileges and blessings here, and everlasting glory hereafter, are to be built; no man whatsoever has any right to attempt the laying, nor can he ever, with all his wit and learning, lay any other, (that will answer his end) besides that which is already laid in the eternal counsels of divine wisdom and grace, in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, in the incarnation, obedience, and sufferings of the Redeemer, and in the plain doctrines and ministry of the gospel, and particularly in my own preaching it; which

that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

foundation is indeed no other than Jesus Christ, who in his person and offices is a firm, abiding, and immovable rock of ages; every way sufficient to bear all the weight that God himself, or the believing sinner can lay upon him; *neither is there salvation in any other.* (Acts iv. 12.)

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble:

12 And, (3<sup>d</sup>) as to the *superstructure* on this foundation; if any one in his preaching, like *Apollon* on one hand, build upon it such spiritual, true, and holy doctrines and practices, as for their purity, excellence, and usefulness, are like gold and silver and precious stones, which are lasting in their nature, and will bear the severest trial, and are of great value among men; or if, like *Judaizing* teachers, on the contrary, he build upon this foundation, such false doctrines, and irregular practices, as in their own nature are worthless, contemptible, and perishing, and of as little account as wood, hay, and stubble, which cannot endure the fire:

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest. For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every

13 The time is coming, when the nature and tendencies of the doctrine, which every one preaches and holds, whether it be sound and right, or corrupt and wrong, or leading to pious and moral, or to irreligious and immoral courses, shall be clearly distinguished, and shall appear to be what it really is, both to him that taught it, and to them that inhaled it: For, whatever men may think of it now, the day of judgment, that all-revealing and impartial day of account, will thoroughly try and discover it; because as the refiner's fire tries metals, and separates the dross from gold and silver and distinguishes such things, as will endure its heat, from those that will be consumed by it; so the penetrating light, and strict process of the judgment of the great day \*, will try and prove every one's opinions and cor-

respondent

#### N O T E.

\* By the day and the fire here spoken of, some understand the gospel day, and the clear and searching light of its doctrines; others, the day of Jerusalem's destruction, when consumed by fire. But it seems evident to me, that the apostle meant the day of Judgment, and the all-searching discoveries, with their different events, that will then be made: For in the two next verses he speaks of it, as the day of trial and retribution, when every man shall receive his reward, and they that are built upon Christ, as their foundation, shall be saved; and he speaks of this, (chap. iv. 5.) as the time of the Lord's coming, when he will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and every man shall have praise of God; and this is what he often calls, by way of eminence, that day, and the day of Christ. It is

likewise as plain, that the imaginary fire of purgatory cannot be the fire here intended: For this fire is not for punishment, by way of satisfaction for venial sins, as the papists speak of their purgatory; but it is, principally at least, for trial of doctrines, inclusive of correspondent practices, as the whole context shews, to prove whether they be good, like gold, silver, and precious stones; or be bad, like wood, hay, and stubble; and the doctrine of Paul and Apollon, as well as of false teachers, must be tried by it; but it cannot be pretended, that Paul and Apollon themselves, were to pass through the fire of purgatory. And though here seems to be a reference to the flaming light, and consuming heat of the final conflagration, yet the expression must be considered as metaphorical.

everyman's work,  
of what sort it is.

14 If any man's  
work abide,  
which he hath  
built thereupon,  
he shall receive a  
reward.

15 If any man's  
work shall be  
burnt, he shall  
suffer loss: but he  
himself shall be  
saved; yet so as  
by fire.

16 Know ye not  
that ye are the  
temple of God,  
and

respondent practices, of what kind soever they be; and will shew whether they come up to the scripture standard of divine truth; and whether they rest upon, and be agreeable to the fundamental doctrine of salvation alone by Jesus Christ, or not.

14 If, in this awful day of scrutiny, any man's doctrines, and his behaviour answerable to them, which he has erected upon this foundation, shall appear to harmonize with it, and stand proof, he shall receive a gracious and ample retribution, with peculiar marks of honour †, in proportion to his eminent degree of faithfulness, labour, and usefulness in the work of the gospel.

15 If, on the contrary, the doctrines which any one has espoused, and put into practice, through ignorance and mistake, shall prove to be unscriptural and false, though not fundamentally erroneous; and so shall be rejected and nullified, like contemptible and combustible materials, which are burnt up, instead of being preserved and refined, by fire; That man, how fond soever he were of them before, shall lose all the advantage, which he vainly expected from them: But he himself being founded upon Christ, as his rock, and only ground of his faith and hope toward God for eternal life; and not carried into licentiousness by his other mistaken notions, shall be saved from the wrath to come; though it be with apparent difficulty and danger, which may be illustrated by a man's escaping with his life, through the fire that burns down his house, and consumes his goods. (See the note on *ver.* 13.)

16 But, to shew that there are other errors of still more pernicious consequence, let me remind you what has been hinted, (*ver.* 9.) about your being *God's own building*. Don't ye understand and consider, that ye who are his true church, erected on Christ as your foundation, are set apart for God by his own appointment, sanctified and devoted to him as his temple, in a much higher and nobler sense, than the *Jewish* temple ever

was

#### N O T E S

when applied to the trying and discovering, proving and disproving the truth of *doctrines* including answerable practices, and to the continuing of those that are false and wrong; because no material fire can have such an operation upon what is merely of a moral nature, and therefore it is added, *ver.* 15. that he who builds wood, hay, and stubble on the foundation, shall be saved *as by fire*, or in like manner as a man narrowly escapes through the fire, when his house is all in flames about him; and none can doubt but that *wood, hay, and stubble, and gold, silver,*

and *precious stones*, must be taken in a metaphorical sense.

† *This reward* seems to point out some higher degrees of glory, than other real christians and gospel ministers, of lower attainments in light and grace, purity, labour, and usefulness, will receive; because, as appears from the next verse, every true believer, and faithful servant of Christ, who holds the head, *shall be saved*; though he may suffer a loss, that lies in opposition to receive this reward.

and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

was of old; and that he who manifested himself by visible tokens of his gracious presence in sacred that house, and so was said to dwell there, doth now, in a more spiritual, excellent effectual manner, reside by special relation and possession, operation and favour, in you, as his own habitation, through the Spirit? (See the note on *Chap. vi. 19.*)

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which ye are.

17 If therefore any man shall maintain and propagate such errors, as are subversive of the foundation itself, and so shall corrupt, and doctrinally destroy (*ᾠστρεῖ*) this spiritual temple of God's own erection on a crucified Jesus; the case of that man, be his pretences and figure in the church ever so great, is abundantly worse than that of suffering loss, and being saved as by fire; (*ver. 15.*) he shall not be saved at all; but the holy and jealous God will punish him with everlasting destruction; for this Spiritual temple of the living God, which ye his church are, is purified and set apart for himself, and the corrupting of this in fundamental points of principle and practice, is a much more heinous crime, than it was to profane the courts of the *Jewish* temple and will be more severely animadverted upon in the great day.

18 Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

18 Let every one then take heed, whether he be a preacher or hearer, that he do not cheat, and impose upon himself to his own confusion, by propagating or entertaining any pernicious error, through a vain conceit of his own superior understanding: If there be any among you, who, like the Philosophers, politicians and *Rabbies* of the age, seems to himself, or others, to be wise in earthly things, and according to the false judgment that the men of this world make of wisdom; let him renounce all this, as far as it opposes or interferes with the doctrines of the gospel, and be humble under a sense of the insufficiency of all its parts and learning, ever to attain to just and spiritual apprehensions of them; and let him be contented to be ridiculed as a fool, by the high pretenders to reason, for embracing the doctrine of the cross, which they esteem foolishness, (*chap. i. 18.*) that he may become truly wise toward God and to the salvation of his own Soul, through faith, in Jesus Christ.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written

19 For all the policy and prudence, wit, and learning of the men of this world, which gave them a reputation for wisdom, are no better than folly in God's account, and in comparison with his glorious scheme of salvation through a crucified redeemer; and he will prove it to be so, how much soever they pride themselves in it and



written, He taketh the wife in their own craftiness.

and think to carry their point by it : For we may apply to our present purpose, what is said of the most sagacious of mankind, (*Job v. 13.*) where it is written to this effect, he entangles and catches the worldly wise in their own cunning contrivances, and turns their most prudent and best concerted measures to their own ruin, or, as it is further explained in that context, (*ver. 12, 14.*) *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty ; so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize ; — and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong : they meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noon-day as in the Night.*

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wife, that they are vain.

20 And still further, to shew that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, (*ver. 19.*) It is written in another place, (*Psal. xciv. 9—11.*) 'The great Jehovah is intimately acquainted with the thoughts, projects and reasonings (*διδασκαλίας*) of the wisest of men, and perfectly knows that, compared with his own counsels they are all empty and insignificant, foolish and ineffectual ; and that none of their ways of thinking are any farther right and useful, than *he teaches men knowledge.*

21 Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ;

21 Since therefore all the ingenuity and learning in the world, especially with respect to spiritual and eternal things, are mere folly, when compared with the wisdom of God ; and since no man can lead you into the way of salvation, but as he himself is taught of God, let none of you boast of, and call yourselves the disciples of any man whatsoever, to the rejecting and despising of others that preach the same evangelical doctrines with themselves : This would be to forget that they are but men, and to exclude yourselves from the benefit, which ye might receive from one, as well as another of them. For all things, of what nature or kind soever and particularly those that relate to the dispensation of the gospel, are given, in a covenant way, to you that believe in Jesus ; and they are designed and ordered of God, for your spiritual advantage :

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ;

22 All the faithful ministers and apostles of the Lord, such as *Paul, Apollos, and Peter*, under whom respectively different parties among you have ranged themselves ; (*chap. i. 12.*) all these, together with their gifts, graces, and ministrations, are appointed and given for your sakes, that ye may be built up in faith and holiness, to complete salvation : (*Eph. iv. 11—16.*) All the affairs of this world are in the hands of Christ not to give you a civil right to its ample possessions, as if

temporal property and dominion were founded in grace \* ; but to give you *Gentile*, as well as *Jewish* believers, a covenant claim to, and a sanctified use of, as much of them as he sees to be best for you ; and to dispose of them, and over-rule them for your good, as the *Government is upon his shoulders and he is head over all things to the church*; (Isa. ix. 6. and Eph. i. 22.) Your own lives are also given you for a blessing ; and shall be continued just so long, and in such circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse, as, upon the whole, is best for you † ; and the lives of his ministering servants are preserved *for your furtherance and joy of faith*: (Phil. i. 25.) Death itself, that greatest terror to human nature, has lost it's sting ; and in whatever way it comes to you, whether in the more or less lingering and painful, by the course of nature, or the hand of violence, it shall be your eternal gain ; and even when your Ministers seal their testimony with their blood, *and Christ is magnified in their bodies dying, as well as living*, (Phil. i. 20.) it is for the confirmation of your faith in that gospel, for which they bravely suffer unto death : All present things, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature, or of the comfortable or afflictive kind, *work together for your good* : (Rom. viii. 28.) And every further occurrence to you, or us, on this side the grave, is wisely adjusted beforehand, in God's counsels and covenant, for your advantage : And to crown all, the glory and blessedness of the future state after death and judgment and for ever, is *an inheritance reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation*. (1 Pet. i. 4, 5.) In a word, all things whatsoever whether we take them in one or another of these views, are put into the inventory of the covenant settlement, which is made upon you, to be used and enjoyed by you, or improved and over-ruled for you to subserve, or make up your spiritual and eternal felicity.

23 And ye are  
Christ's,

23 And that which secures all this, and is indeed the completion of it, is, that ye are not any *Man's*, but Christ's peculiar people, property, and subjects, Spouse and members, whom his Father has given to him, and he has purchased with his own blood ; and who have yielded

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle probably brings in *the world*, among those things, which, speaking of *Gentile* believers, he says are theirs, in opposition to the fond notion of the *Jews*, who despised the *Gentiles*, counting them as *nothing*, and *like unto spittle*; and who thought that God made the *World* only for the sake of their own nation. See 2 *Ejd.* vi. 55—59.

† It seems much too narrow, to confine *life, death, things present, and things to come*, to what befel the *Apostles* in this life, for the sake of the church; and yet as such things may be well comprehended in this extensive account of the *all things*, which are the believers, I have given them a place in the paraphrase,

Christ's; and  
Christ is God's.

ded yourselves, up by faith to him, to be saved and governed by him, as your head, Lord, and King, and to be filled with all the blessings of grace and glory which are treasured up in him for you : And there is no doubt to be made of his being able and willing to answer all your dependencies on him, and to complete your happiness ; since, in his divine nature, he is the eternal Son of God ; and in his human nature, and office capacity, he is the mediator and Saviour, of God the Father's own providing, that he may take effectual care of you, till he perfects all that concerns you, in such a way and manner, as shall leave no room for glorying in men ; but as shall be intirely to his own praise and his Father's glory through him, and to your own utmost satisfaction, as all that is in God and Christ is yours.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what faithfulness and prudence should ministers accommodate their discourses to the circumstances of the people ! But, how unchristian-like and injurious are carnal party contentions about religion, and setting up one servant of Christ, in opposition to another, while both are united in the same spirit and design ! They are all useful to subserve his work ; and he so far honours them, as to make them in an inferior, instrumental sense, workers together with him. But the glory and success of all their wisdom and labour is to be ascribed to the grace of God, which is given to them, and is with them : They are only ministers, by whom any believe, as the Lord freely grants it to them. Alas ! What can the most eminent preachers do to saving purposes, unless God give the increase, both as to conversion and edification ! And an increase is not to be expected from him, unless they preach Christ as the foundation which God has laid, and besides which, no other can be laid. O how careful should both ministers and people be, to keep to this foundation, and build all other religious doctrines and duties upon it ! Since God will destroy them that go off from it, and by their pernicious errors corrupt the church, which is his husbandry and building, and his temple consecrated to him. And how concerned should all, who are called by Christ's name, be, that the doctrines they espouse, and their practice answerable to it, be set upon, and be agreeable to this foundation ! For, if they are not so, they will be but like wood, hay, and stubble, in the great day, which will try and consume them ; though he, who, through ignorance, and undesigning mistake, went into them, may himself be saved. But, if they are consonant to the fundamental truths of the gospel, they, like gold, silver, and precious stones, will endure the grand trial, and be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Among them therefore that shall be saved, some will receive higher rewards of grace than others, according to the different degrees of faithful services, which, by the same grace, they were enabled to perform.—How infinitely superior is the wisdom of God, in the scheme of salvation by a crucified Redeemer, to all the wisdom of men, which is mere foolishness in his account, who is thoroughly acquainted with all their thoughts and reasonings, and knows them to be vain ! And how much better is it to resign our own wisdom, though ever so highly esteemed by the men of this world, to the unerring and adorable wisdom of God, than to oppose our own measures to his, which is only to deceive ourselves in matters of everlasting consequence ! But how great is the honour and happiness of true believers ! since all things are theirs, whether ministers or ordinances, this world, life or death, things present, or things to come, as they are Christ's, who has an interest in them, and can effectually secure all blessings to them, as he is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of the Father's appointment ; and as all in him, and in God, is engaged for their happiness.

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle states the true character, and the esteem that ought to be had of gospel ministers, who must stand or fall, not by man's, but by God's own judgment concerning them, 1,—6. Cautions the Corinthians against priding themselves in what they had received, and against despising him, and his fellow servants, on account of their ignominious treatment from the world, 7,—13. Claims their regards to himself, as their spiritual father in Christ, 14,—16. And shews his great concern for them, in that he had sent Timothy to them, and intended himself to come, and rectify disorders among them, 17,—21.*

## TEXT.

LET a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS to the character, under which I and my dear fellow labourers would be regarded among you; let none exalt us too high, as though we had dominion ever their faith; (2 Cor. i. 24.) nor make so little account of our office, as though it were contemptible, insignificant, or unnecessary: Nor let them be influenced, by any external or personal considerations whatsoever, to depreciate some, and idolize others, that are faithful: But let every one, laying aside a party-spirit, judge concerning us all, as neither more nor less \* than the servants of Christ, whom he has commissioned and commanded, qualified and assists, to labour under him, and in subordination to him, who is our Lord and Master and the great subject of our ministry, and on whom all its success depends: And let them consider us as persons, whom he has advanced to an honourable and important, though laborious station in his house and family, as stewards in trust, for dispensing, both to Jews and Gentiles, the great and unsearchable doctrines of the gospel of the grace of God †.

2 Further-

## NOTES.

\* The word, (*υπηρται*) rendered *ministers*, is commonly used for *servants*, and primarily signifies such servants, as laboured in *rowing Vessels*; and so intimates that ministers are to take great pains in their Lord's work, like under-rowers to him.

† By the *mysteries of God*, some understand the word and Sacraments. But though the last, as well as the first of these are, to be dispensed by the ministers of Christ, and *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, were often styled *mysteries* by the ancients; yet I don't find that the scripture ever uses the word in the last of these senses; and the apostle had said of himself, *chap. i. 17.* that the principal work, for which Christ had sent him, was *not to baptize, but to preach the gospel*; and this is what he immediately refers to here: For this best agrees with the foregoing context, and with his own use of the word in

other places, where, by *mysteries*, he commonly means the *doctrines of Christ*, in one view or other, and often with respect to the calling of the *Gentiles*. And these may be called the *mysteries of God*, as they were secrets in his own breast, till he revealed them, first more obscurely under the Old Testament, and now more clearly under the New; (*Rem. xvi. 25, 26.*) and as, after all the discoveries God has made of them in the gospel, many things contained in them are incomprehensible to our narrow understandings; (*1 Tim. iii. 16.*) and they are still so mysterious to carnal minds, that they have no spiritual discerning of their truth and importance, excellence and glory; it not being given to them to know these *mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*. (*Chap. ii. 14. and Matth. xiii. 35.*)

2 Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found sound faithful.

2 Furthermore, to let you know what sort of ministers I mean, that are to be esteemed for their work's sake, I would add, that it is indispensibly requisite in such a servant of Christ, as is worthy of the character of a *steward*, that he by no means neglect, pervert, or betray his trust, or deal partially in it; but that, in discharging it, he be faithful to his Lord; to his own conscience; to the truth and importance of the gospel committed to him; and to the souls he ministers to, as *not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God*, but *giving to every one his portion in due season.* (Acts xx. 27. and Luke xii. 42.)

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

3 And (as) as to myself, though some among you may invidiously suggest, as though I were false to my trust, *that is* no great matter of uneasiness to me, so far as I am personally affected by it. I would indeed be duly concerned to support the integrity of my character, for the honour of Christ and religion, and for my greater usefulness in the church: But, with respect to the state of the case between God and my own soul it is a mere trifling inconsiderable thing, of the least moment and consequence imaginable, in my account, that I should be judged and censured by any of you, or rashly condemned, as an unfaithful steward, in the opinion of any man whatsoever: These things do not move me; since I am not to stand or fall at the bar of men, who assume to themselves a power of judging me in their day, (*οὐκ αἰσχροτιμῶμεν ἑμῆς*) which can reach no farther than the present life; nor am I to be dealt with, in the great day of the Lord, according to their fallible, partial, and prejudiced sentiments about me: Nay, though I know my own heart better than any other man can, I will not pretend to be absolutely sure, that I am thoroughly right in my own judgment about my entirely disinterested faithfulness in the discharge of every duty incumbent upon me, according to my sincere aims and endeavours, as a minister, and as a christian.

4 For though I can honestly declare, that I am not conscious of any designed or allowed unfaithfulness in myself; and *my rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation in the world; and more abundantly to you wards;* (2 Cor. i. 12.) yet alas! Such is the remaining inadvertence and treachery of my own heart, and in *so many things we all offend,* (Jam. iii. 2.) that I dare not depend on what I have done, as a sufficient justification

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not thereby justified: but

but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God.

6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollos, for your sakes; that ye might

of myself, and my conduct, in God's account\*: But I humbly appeal for my integrity to the final decision of the Lord Jesus himself, the omniscient judge of all, by whose sentence alone my cause must be determined when I appear at his awful tribunal; and though he knows me to be sincere, I look for gracious acceptance of my person and services, not on that account, but through his merit and righteousness.

5 Let none of you therefore anticipate the great decisive day of trial, by taking upon yourselves to pass sentence before hand upon me, or others of my brethren: Take heed of judging our hearts, which God only can know; (1 Kings viii. 39.) and of going into uncharitable censures upon us, lest ye yourselves be judged; (Matt. vii. 1, 2.) but wait till the Lord Jesus himself shall come to judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom: (2 Tim. iv. 1.) Then he, who searches the reins and hearts, (Rev. ii. 23) will bring forth, and lay open the scenes, that are now covered with the thickest darkness, and will set those things in the clearest light, which at present are concealed from human view, and yet are necessary to be known, in order to a just estimate of persons and causes; and he will then make plain discoveries of the most secret principles and dispositions, thoughts, contrivances, and designs of every one's mind and heart, both of theirs that give themselves the liberty of sitting in judgment upon others, and of theirs that are censured by them: And as many may possibly be acquitted in that day, whom we now condemn and vilify; and many may be condemned then, whom we now admire and applaud; so every one of those, and those only, who shall then be approved of God, will be publicly owned and honoured by him, how unrighteously soever they may have been arraigned and cast, at the bar of man's judgment here.

6 These things, my dear brethren, I have represented in a figurative strain, as personating myself and the eloquent *Apollos*, by substituting our own names, instead of others which are intended, under this borrowed form of speech: and I have chosen to refer the application to your own thoughts, for avoiding envy and offence, and out of mere tenderness to you; that from your own reflections on what has been said, about our dis-

#### N O T E.

\* Though justified here refers immediately to the charge of unfaithfulness, or neglect, in the apostle's fulfilling the duty of his office; yet it shew. how careful he was to re-

nounce all pretences to justification before God, on the foot of his own sincere obedience, when he spoke of *that*; and therefore I have added a hint of this sort.

might learn in us not to think of *men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

disclaiming all authority over your faith and consciences, and about our being only *servants of Christ*, (ver. 1.) and *Ministers, by whom ye believed*, (chap. iii. 5.) ye might be instructed to take heed of entertaining a higher opinion of any mere man whatsoever, than appears to be his due, according to what I have now wrote on this head, agreeable to the whole tenor of the word of God: And my design in all this is, to adjust your sentiments about *Men*, that none of you, from a factious spirit, may over value or vainly boast of, and pride himself in, any one of your admired leaders, to the contemning and running down of another, who, on the contrary, may be as much cryed up by his own party, while neither of them are any thing more than God makes them to be to you; and therefore all your glorying should be in him, and not at all in them, or in yourselves, on account of what benefit ye may have received by their means. (*chap. i. 29,—31.*)

? For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if

7 For to hide pride from your own eyes \*, as well as to prevent your idolizing of one Minister, to the depreciating of another, consider how the matter stands with respect to your own attainments. I would say to any one of you, that thinks too highly of himself, or of instruments, who is it that has made *yourself* to differ in your spiritual advantages, from what you once was, and from what multitudes of others still are? Who has distinguished you from them, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit which you are partakers of? Or whence is it that one of you excels another in them? It is not from any power or worthiness of your own, who was *dead in trespasses and sins*, and *by nature a child of wrath, even as others*; (Eph. ii. 1, 3.) nor is it from any skill or virtue in him that planted, or him that watered, who are only *Ministers, by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave unto you*: (chap. iii. 5, 6, 7.) All is therefore entirely and alone of his free favour, who gives the increase, and distributes his blessings, in a sovereign

#### N O T E.

\* When I reflect, that all along, in the preceding and following verses, the apostle is speaking, not to the leaders, but to the members of the church, as distinguished from them, I cannot tell how to think, with the general stream of expositors, that this verse relates most immediately, much less *only*, to these leaders; nor, on that supposition, can I make out the propriety and force of the connection and argument, with any tolerable satisfaction to myself: For this verse is brought in to repress the pride, not of those for whom the brethren (ver. 6.) were puffed up, but of the brethren themselves, that they

might lay aside all glorying in them, as considering that all spiritual endowments, which distinguish any persons whatsoever, are entirely owing to the free gift of God; and so the argument against boasting, on account of what they themselves had received, by means of their minister's labours, is much of the same strain with that, which is used against glorying in God's presence, *chap. i. 29—32.* where it undoubtedly relates to saving benefits: And that it is not to be *entirely restrained* here to spiritual gifts. See the note on ver. 9.

if thou didst not receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?

vercign manner, to whom, and in what degree, he pleases. Now if you received all your supernatural and distinguishing benefits only as his free gift, and from his gracious and powerful operation upon you, how insolent, preposterous, and ungrateful is it? How dishonourable to God, and unworthy of your christian character, and of your absolute dependence upon him, and obligations to him, for you to vaunt and pride yourself in them, or in the instruments of conveying them, as if these excellent blessings were the product of your own study, diligence, or merit, or of their art, and not a mere vouchsafement of free favour from the God of all grace?

8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

8 And yet there seems to be too much of this unbecoming and self-sufficient temper in some of you; ye are now satisfied with your present condition, under the conduct of your new teachers, who fill up with over-weaning thoughts of your own accomplishments, as well as of theirs; ye now imagine yourselves to abound greatly in spiritual wisdom and grace, as well as in human knowledge and learning, and in the good things of this life; and ye pride yourselves in your religious, as well as other acquirements, as though, like princes, ye were arrived at the height of prosperity of every kind, apart from us, who first planted and watered the gospel among you; without our concurrence; and while we are absent from you; and as though ye never had received, and now no further need any assistance from us: And I heartily wish, (*οραλον*) that ye did indeed flourish in every thing that is great, excellent, and glorious and most highly worthy the christian character\*, as much as ye fancy yourselves to do; that so we might rejoice in your mercy, and share in your happiness and glory, as ministers that were really instrumental, in the hand of the Lord, towards your enjoying them, whatever some think to the contrary; and that we might no longer be slighted and despised by you, to the increasing of our many tribulations, which are so great already.

9 For

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle's saying, *I wish ye did reign, that we also might reign with you*, intimates, that they arrogated to themselves what they really were not possessed of, and what he would have been glad to have gloried in with them. But it is certain that they did remarkably excel in spiritual gifts, as is evident from chap. i. 5, 7. and Corinth being a rich and flourishing city, it appears from what the apostle wrote to them about their collections for the poor saints, 2 *Epist.* chap. viii. and ix. that their worldly circumstances were suffi-

ciently affluent to have relieved his, and his fellow labourers necessities, that they, in this respect, *might reign with them*: And therefore, when he *wished that they did reign*, he surely meant something more than all this; and what could that be, but their abounding attainments in *grace* and *holiness*, which they no doubt, falsely assumed to themselves, and gloried in, as well as in their spiritual gifts, and temporal wealth; and which he would have rejoiced to find in them.



9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

9 For as to myself, who was called last of all to the Apostleship; (*chap. xv. 8.*) and as to other Apostles of Christ, who, as well as I, are his last witnesses and extraordinary messengers to the church, as coming after his former servants, the Prophets; It seems to me, by the operations of divine providence, that God for the manifestation of his own power and glory in, and by us; has exposed us to the extremest perils, as those condemned criminals among the *Romans* were, that used to be brought last upon the theatre, and made a public show of, as persons devoted to cruel combats, which at all events, must end in their death\*: For by the severity, the ignominy, and strange variety of our conflicts with all sorts of miseries and deaths, we are brought upon the stage of this world to be made a public gazing stock, and a sign to be wondered at by every spectator; by holy Angels, with applauding wonder, and all good men, with pity and compassion; and by the fallen Angels, and all the wicked upon earth, with barbarous insult and triumph.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honourable, but we are despised.

10 In this Situation, which is so very different from yours we are thought to be weak and foolish creatures by the men of this world, and perhaps, by some of yourselves for preaching the plain doctrines of a crucified Saviour and *that* in their full extent to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews* and for running so many hazards thereby; but ye are wonderful wise and prudent men in your own opinion, and in the esteem of many others, because ye have so much worldly policy, as to run no risks for Christ and to varnish over the doctrines of his gospel with human eloquence, that ye may accommodate them, and recommend yourselves to the taste of men of corrupt minds: We are oppressed with numerous sufferings in his cause, to the infeebling of our bodily strength†; but your corporal strength and comforts are not impaired by any tribulations for his name's sake; your worldly wisdom having carried you into measures to escape them in your profession of Christ and the gospel: Ye likewise stand in high reputation with the men of this world and with carnal

#### N O T E S.

\* I have given various senses of *last of all*, and one among the rest, which carries a strong allusion to the criminals, that in the public games were brought last upon the stage, and might be called (*εὐδαίμονες*) men devoted to death; because after the morning combats (who were allowed armour to defend themselves against the wild beasts) had played their part in the theatre, these were brought forth at noon, without any covering to pro-

tect them against the dangers they were exposed to; and if they escaped with their lives one day, they were reserved for the next, and so on, till they were slain, see Dr. Hammond and Whitby.

† Weak (*ασθενεῖς*) sometimes signifies afflicted, and loaded with sufferings, as in *chap. ii. 3* and *1 Cor. xii. 10.* and *xiii. 9.* and I have taken it in that sense here, to keep the ideas distinct in this, and the foregoing passage.

carnal temporizing professors, on all these accounts ; but we are looked upon, and treated with the utmost contempt for our faithful adherence to him, and his pure gospel, under these disadvantageous circumstances.

11 Ye live in the midst of all outward ease and affluence, in a rich city, and in a commodious houses of your own ; but we, ever since we gave up our names to the Lord Jesus, and entered upon his service, even to this very day, are exposed to all the hardships of hunger and thirst, and nakedness, as being often so destitute of the conveniencies and comforts of life, that we scarce have necessary food to eat or decent apparel to put on: And not only so ; but, in one place and another, we are likewise exercised with the sharp and ignominious discipline of being smitten on the face with the hand, scourged with thongs, and beaten with rods ; (*Acts. xxiii. 2. and 2. Cor. xi. 23—25.*) and, like our great Lord and Master, (*Luke ix. 58.*) we are harrassed and driven from one city, town, and country, to another, and forced to wander about, like vagabonds, that have no house or home or certain habitation, that can be called our own.

12 And, while ye are liberal to your new teachers, and might easily have spared a competent supply for us, we have earned our bread with the sweat of our brows and the labour of our hands ; and have chose to do so when circumstances called for it, rather than seem burdensome, to you, or other churches, or than prejudice any against us, as mercenary creatures, and against the gospel on that account : (*Acts xviii. 3. and xx. 34. 1 Thess. 2. 9. and 2 Epist. iii. 8.*) While we are loaded with curses and reproaches by our enemies for the sake of Christ, who also suffered the like himself ; we, according to his command and example, (*Matth. v. 44. and Luke xxiii. 34.*) heartily wish and pray for blessings to come down upon them, that they may repent and be saved : While we are injured in our liberty, ease, and property for conscience sake, we patiently bear it ; and, instead of *rendering evil for evil*, we endeavour to *overcome evil with good*. (*Rom. xii. 17, 21.*)

13 While we are maliciously slandered and stigmatized with odious imputations, and our name is cast out, as *evil for Christ's sake*, (*Luke vi. 22.*) we make no returns of opprobrious language to those that abuse us ; but exhort and beseech them, in a gentle, kind, and tender manner, for their own sakes, as well ours, to entertain more just and favourable thoughts of us: But notwithstanding all this inoffensive, meek, and winning behaviour, we all along have been, and to

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of

of the world, and  
of the off-scour-  
ing of all things  
into this day.

this very day continue to be accounted, treated, and trampled upon, as the vilest of Wretches that are not fit to live; as the very sink of all that is loathsome and abominable in the world; and the refuse of all things\*; yea, we are deemed proper victims for averting the divine anger, as if we were the cause of all public calamities, and to be every way as despicable, and as much to be abhorred, as the very worst of men, whom the *Heathens* used to offer in sacrifice, for the purgation of their cities in a time of pestilence, or other public calamities.

14 I write not  
these things to  
blame you, but as  
my beloved sons  
warn you.

14 I do not draw out this particular detail of contemptuous and injurious treatment, which we have met with and to which even some of you have not a little contributed, by neglecting, slighting, and grieving us; nor do I speak of your proud and vain boastings, and of our meek, patient, and benevolent carriage under our sufferings, with a design of degrading and defaming you, or of exposing you to contempt and disgrace among other churches, though it must be owned that ye have too much reason to be ashamed in your own minds†; but I mention these things in a tender manner, and in great kindness and faithfulness to you, that like an affectionate father, I may caution and admonish you, as my dear children, to take heed of pride and self-conceit, and of a sinful, unbecoming behaviour towards us, the Apostles of Christ; and to attend to your own duty, with all humility and circumspection, for time to come.

15 For though  
you have ten  
thousand instruc-  
tors in Christ, yet  
there are not many  
Fathers: for in  
Christ

15 For though ye may have ever so many, even were they myriads (*μυρία παιδογυγνόντων*) of the most famous teachers, to help you forward, like schoolmasters, in the ways of religion; and how useful soever ye may suppose them to have been, for assisting your growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; yet ye have not many spiritual Fathers, that have a paternal care and affection for you, as having been the instruments, as I was, of first

#### N O T E S.

\* The critics have generally observed, that the words (*περιπατάμεθα* and *περιπαύμεθα*) here rendered *the filth and off-scouring*, allude to a known custom among the heathens, who were wont to choose human victims out of the dregs of the people: to sacrifice yearly to their Gods, by way of expiation; and when visited with the plague, or other public calamity, used to offer one of the meanest, the vilest, and the most sordid of the people, for the lustration of the city, to cleanse it from the guilt which might be supposed to have brought the judgment upon it.

† It is with admirable prudence, and sweetness of insinuation, that the apostle apologizes for his mentioning the foregoing things, to take off offence, and establish his own authority, by telling them that it was not designed to upbraid and expose them; but only, in his parental affection, to caution them against sins, which they too plainly were guilty of. but which it might have been too exasperating for him to have so expressly mentioned, and directly charged upon them, as may be proper to represent in a paraphrase.

Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

first forming Christ in you; and so there is none, to whom ye ought to pay a greater regard, than to me: For it can't be denied, but that I was the first who planted the gospel among you, unto which God gave a happy increase; (*chap. iii. 6.*) or that I had the honour of begetting you to Christ, not indeed efficiently as though I were the author of the new birth: but ministerially and instrumentally, by means of my preaching the gospel to you.

16 Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

16 Though I might therefore well speak with the high tone of a Father's authority, to charge and command you; yet I rather choose, in the most endearing and condescending manner, to beseech and exhort you with the bowels of a kind and loving parent, that, instead of turning aside after those, who aim at corrupting the simplicity of your faith and manners, ye would follow my directions, which I delivered to you, as I received them from the Lord himself; (*chap. xi. 23. and xv. 3.*) and would be imitators (*μιμηται*) of my example, in humility, faith, and conversation, as far as I therein follow him. (*chap. xi. 1.*)

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

17 To excite you to this, and assist you in it; as I cannot immediately come myself, I have, in the tenderness of my concern and affection for you, sent the lovely young Evangelist *Timothy*, who, having been also converted by my ministry, is as dear to me, as the Son of a Father's own likeness can be to him, and as an excellent brother in Christ ought to be to you; and he is a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus, heartily embarked in his cause and interest, and may be depended upon, for his integrity, in all that he shall say from me, and about me: He, who has accompanied me in my travels and labours, (*Acts xx. 4. and Rom. xvi. 21.*) and has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, and afflictions, &c. (*2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.*) he will not only remind you (if need be) of what I have preached, and how I behaved, when I was with you; but will also further inform you, what has been the course and tenor of my life and doctrine, by the grace and assistance of Christ, and to his glory, according to what I have always preached, not in one place and another only; but uniformly and constantly in all the churches, where-soever I have been, as well as when I was with you.

18 Now some are puffed up, as though

18 I understand that your false teachers and their party persin in their evil practices, with great haughtiness and insolence; and make their boast, with a sort of insulting triumph, as though I were loth, and afraid to come

though I would  
not come to you.

19 But I will  
come to you  
shortly, if the  
Lord will, and  
I know not the  
day of them  
which are passed  
up; but the  
power.

20 For the  
kingdom of God  
is not in word,  
but in power.

21 What will  
ye? Shall I come  
unto you with a  
rod, or in love,  
and

come, and talk with them face to face; and perhaps they may strengthen their confidences of this sort, from my sending *Timothy*, instead of coming in person to you.

19 But, whatever they may think, I fully intend, and am very desirous, and if it be the will of God, and he, in whose hands are all my ways, shall give me opportunity for it, I will certainly, ere long, make you a visit; and will then enquire into, try, and take an exact account of those, that behave in such a proud and imperious manner: Not that I shall examine into their philosophy and learning, eloquence and oratory, high swelling words of vanity and specious professions of religion, upon which they so much value themselves, and are applauded by their faction; but the main point, that I shall consider, and search into, is, what authority they have to preach; and what there appears to be of the power of God, and of the gifts and graces of his spirit in them, and in their ministrations; as also what efficacy attends them upon their own, and others hearts and lives.

20 For, let men imagine what they will to the contrary, the excellencies and blessings of the gospel state, in which God has erected his kingdom of grace here, to be consummated in the kingdom of glory hereafter, do not consist in human learning, or in outward professions; but in an experience of what is wrought by the power of God: Nor is the gospel propagated, or a work of grace begun and carried on in the soul, by fine words and philosophical reasoning; but by the miraculous operations of the spirit, for confirming the truth of one; and by a divine energy, which attends the plain preaching of a crucified Jesus, for effecting the other.

21 Upon the whole then, in what manner would ye wish and choose, that I should come among you? Is it, that it should be, as with a rod in my hand, to chastize you for your faults; and with all the severity of my apostolick authority, to correct offenders, and inflict both spiritual and \* corporal punishments upon them, according to their due deserts? This would be very irksome work to me, and no less grievous to you; and yet I shall be forced in faithfulness to proceed to this extremity

#### N O T E.

\* *Coming to them with a rod*, seems to signify more than barely coming with the rod of discipline, to pass spiritual censures, which the apostle directs the church itself to do throughout the following chapter; and by their doing of which, they would prevent his coming with a rod to them. It may therefore include, at least, his coming to exercise that power, which the apostles had to

inflict corporal punishments upon notorious offenders, as in the cases of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Elymas* the sorcerer, and *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, for vindicating the truth and purity of the gospel; and striking every mind with awe and terror, that should dare to corrupt or oppose it. *Acts* v. 5, 10. and xiii. 11. and 1 *Tim.* i. 20. See Dr *Bishop's* notes on this place, and on *chap.* v. 3. 4.

and in the spirit  
of meekness?

mity, if I should find them obstinately persisting in their evil practices, and connived at by the church. (*chap. v. 2.*) Or would ye not rather, that I should come with a heart full of the most affectionate fatherly love, and in a spirit of meekness, gentleness, and kindness, to encourage, commend, and comfort you? This I shall rejoice to do, in case what has been so much amiss be reformed, before I come among you; and this would be every way as agreeable and profitable to yourselves, as delightful to me.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What an important trust has Christ committed to his ministering servants, as stewards of the great things of God, which are now revealed in the gospel, and yet surpass our comprehension! And how should they be concerned to be found faithful in discharging it! They are indeed to be esteemed highly for their works sake; but it is a small matter with them, how they stand in the opinion of men, since he, whose judgment they must abide by, is the Lord: To him therefore they refer themselves, to be cleared of all false accusations, as not being conscious to themselves of any wilful, or allowed defaults; and yet, as they know that they are not perfect, they do not depend upon their own integrity, for acceptance with God to eternal life, in the great day of account.—How cautious should we be of rashly censuring others, before that time comes, which will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts! How humble should we be under a sense of our manifold defects! And how far from boasting in ourselves, or others, since all the good that we, or they are partakers of, is really no more than what is received as the gift of God's free favour, which makes the difference between them that have it, and have it not! And yet, alas, how proud, vain, and self-confident are we prone to be, as if we were full and rich, and reigned like kings, and were wise, and strong, and honourable, because of the gifts and favours of a spiritual and temporal nature, which God bestows upon us: And, at the same time, how often do the best of his servants seem to be set forth, as spectacles to angels, men, and devils! How are they looked upon as weak men and fools! how are they despised, defamed, reviled, and persecuted, and exposed to hunger, thirst, and nakedness, and to wandering about like vagabonds! And how are they treated as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, while they are indeed the excellent of the earth, meek, and patient, and return blessings, and kind entreaties and prayers in favour of the worst of their enemies! But great wisdom is necessary to manage faithful reproofs of others, as occasions require, in such an inoffensive manner, as not to provoke and expose, instead of reclaiming them; and sometimes to transfer them in a figure to one's self, rather than seem to bear too hard upon them: And yet Christians themselves need to be reminded of the admonitions that have been given them; and to be excited to follow the doctrine and example of the apostles, and of their faithful pastors, who follow Christ, and lead the same holy lives, and preach the same pure gospel, wheresoever they come; as knowing that the kingdom of God is promoted, not by fine words and fair speeches, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, to make a thorough change in men's hearts and lives. And, O how great is the affection of good ministers to their people, and especially to such as they have been instrumental, in the hand of the Spirit, to bring home to Christ! And what veneration and esteem should such have for their spiritual fathers, who had much rather come to them, on all occasions, in the spirit of love and meekness, for their comfort, than with a rod for their correction; and have nothing more at heart than their edification and salvation.

## C H A P. V.

*The apostle blames the Corinthian church for their connivance at an incestuous person, and orders them to excommunicate him, 1,—6. Exhorts them to purge out this, and every other offence, 7, 8. and directs their behaviour towards church members, in distinction from the men of this world, that are guilty of scandalous crimes, 9,—13.*

## TEXT.

IT is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

1 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be

## PARAPHRASE.

IT is credibly and publicly talked abroad, as an undoubted fact, to the great scandal of christianity, that a certain person among you, is well known to live in the sin of whoredom \*; and that not barely of simple fornication, as committed between unmarried persons, but of such unnatural, incestuous uncleanness, as is shocking to all human modesty; and is more criminal, than any that is practised, or tolerated, by the laws of civilized nations, among the heathens themselves, or is ever so much as mentioned by them, without the utmost detestation; namely, that a man, as is the case with one of your number, should have criminal conversation with his mother-in-law, as if she were his own wife †, though his father himself be alive.

2 And yet, flagrant as this iniquity is, which one of your members is chargeable with, the factious part of the church seem to encourage and glory in him ‡; and ye are, too generally, so puffed up with your spiritual gifts and affluent circumstances, and with a vain conceit of your being in a prosperous state on those accounts, as to over-look that foul abomination, which is so dishonourable to Christ, and such a tarnish upon your glory; and ye have not rather, as in duty bound, been tenderly concerned for the delinquent himself, and for the disgrace he has brought upon the church, and upon

## NOTES.

\* The word (*πορνεία*) here used, is frequently, unless when distinguished from adultery, taken in a larger sense, than what we commonly mean by *fornication*, as committed between single persons; and here it includes *incest*, or criminal conversation between persons of near kin; and, if the husband of the mother in law were living, it includes *adultery* too.

† It is not to be thought, that this was the man's own mother; for then the apostle would doubtless have called her so, rather than *his father's wife*, the more to aggravate the crime: But it seems as if the Father were still living, because the apostle speaks of *his suffering wrong*, on this account. 2 Cor. vii.

12. Whether the son had married her, or only used her as his concubine, is uncertain; but, which ever were the case, it was so abominable, that though impurities of this nature were found among some of the most barbarous nations; yet they were disallowed of and abhorred, by the politer civilized heathens, such as the *Greeks* and *Romans*. See *Dr Hammond*.

‡ Perhaps this incestuous person was some famous leader of the factious party, that had him in high admiration for his gifts and other qualifications; and so they were for screening him from public censure, and for extolling him, notwithstanding his sin.

be taken away  
from among you.

on the blessed name and ways of the Lord: nor have ye been deeply humbled and afflicted in your own souls, with lamentation before God, that any thing so vile in itself and so provoking to him, should break out in your religious community: Ye have not seriously and touchingly laid this matter to heart, to the end that he, who lives in such an infamous sin, might be removed from your holy communion, by your passing a solemn church censure upon him. This, though ye have rather chose a contrary course, ought certainly to have been done.

3 For I verily  
am absent in body,  
but present in  
spirit, have judg-  
ed already, as  
though I were  
present, concern-  
ing him that hath  
so done this deed;

3 For though I am not corporally present, to influence and conduct your proceedings against him; yet, my heart and soul being with you, as one solicitously careful about, and earnestly desirous of your eternal welfare; and the spirit of God having given me a view of the true state of your case \*, be assured that, under his inspiration, I have as fully and clearly considered, judged, and determined already, as though I were in person among you, concerning what is right and proper, and unquestionable matter of duty, for you, as a church of Christ, to do, in your process against the man, that has been guilty of this scandalous fact, which is so monstrously indecent, as not to be fit to be named again.

4 In the name  
of our Lord Jesus  
Christ, when ye  
are gathered to-  
gether

4 Ye, as a religious community, incorporated into a church state, according to the order of the gospel, having by the institution of Christ, agreeable to the natural rights of all voluntary societies, full power lodged within yourselves for dealing with disorderly members, and preserving your own purity, according to his laws as king of the church: (*Matth. xviii. 17.*) I have judged, (*ver. 3.*) that ye ought to exert your power, on this sad occasion, in the following solemn and public manner, that all may hear, and fear, and take caution: When ye as a church, shall be assembled together for religious purposes, then, with invocation on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his guidance, assistance, and blessing, with an eye to his glory, and by his authority

#### N O T E.

\* Some suppose that by the apostle's being present in spirit, is meant his being present with them, by a miraculous gift of the spirit, to discern, at a distance, how things stood with them, and what was fit to be done in that case: as *Elisha* discerned, by a prophetic spirit, what his servant did with *Naaman the Syrian*, (*2 Kings v. 27.*) and as *Ezekiel*, in *Babylon*, saw what was done in secret at *Jerusalem*: (*Ezek. viii. and xi.*) and it is highly probable that, as the apostle *Paul* had

the care of all the churches upon him, *2 Cor. xi. 28.* so on the present, and some other important occasions, as in *Gal. ii. 5.* he was favoured with such a sort of extraordinary discerning: But this by no means excludes his being present also in heart affection, and approbation, with the *Corinthians* in the ordinary way; which may be very well meant, by his being present in spirit with them, as that is opposed to his being absent in body from them.



her, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

thority; as also, with full satisfaction in yourselves, as to the concurrence of my mind, under superior influence, and of my heart, which will be as much with you, in a way of approbation and consent, as if I were corporally present among you; and with an humble dependance on the power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the head of the church, to animate your proceedings, and to ratify in heaven what ye shall do, according to his will and command, on earth; (*Mat. xviii. 18.*)

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

5 It is, I say, then your duty, by this divine warrant, and in this solemn manner, the majority at least consenting and approving, to cast such a scandalous and infectious offender out of the church, that he may no longer continue a member of your holy body; to expel him from all the external privileges and ordinances of special communion with you, as tho' he were a *heathen and publican*; (*Matth. xviii. 17.*) and to deliver him back into the visible kingdom of the devil \*. from whence he took him, as one that has no claim to the promises of the covenant of grace. And this ye ought to do, not for the injuring of his person, or of his civil rights and property; but merely for spiritual ends, that, by the blessing of Christ on his own ordinance, the prevailing corruptions of that man's heart and life may be mortified and subdued; and he, through fear, grief, and shame, may be brought to a thorough humiliation, repentance, and reformation, in order to the saving of his soul from deserved wrath and ruin in the great day of account, when the Lord Jesus will sit on the throne of

#### N O T E.

\* Many learned commentators have thought, that this *delivering unto Satan*, refers to an extraordinary miraculous act, by which the in-cel-tuous person was delivered up to the power of the devil, to inflict diseases and torments upon his body, as a means of bringing him to repentance. But it seems pretty strange, and not very agreeable to the mild genius of the gospel, that, by an ordinance of Christ, a person should in this manner, be delivered over to Satan, as the instrument of saving his soul: And it is to be observed, that what the apostle here speaks of was to be the act of the church, whom he had blamed for not exerting it before, *ver. 1.* for whatever might be the meaning of their doing it *with his spirit*, not he, but they were to deliver the man to Satan, and to purge out the old leaven, *ver. 7.* but, as is generally allowed, miraculous powers of this sort were peculiarly *apostolical*, and they seem to belong to the *old*, which the apostle threatened to come with, in case they continued to neglect their duty in proceeding to an excommunication: See the note on *chap. iv. 21.* and therefore

it is not to be supposed, that he should order them, who had it not, to exercise this miraculous power, or should blame them for not having done it before. Upon the whole then, I am inclined to think, that nothing more was intended by *their delivering* this notorious delinquent to Satan, than is suggested in the paraphrase; though it is expressed in these strong terms to strike the mind with the moral awful thoughts of the dreadful condition of those, that are re-committed to the power of such a tyrannical master, and are shut out from the preservation and blessing, which God has promised to his church. But, be this as it will, since no miraculous powers are now lodged in any hands whatsoever, all that churches, in our days, are to aim at in excommunications, ought to be purely of a spiritual nature for the glory of God, and the preservation of the order and peace, purity and reputation of the church; and for the good of the offender's own soul, without the least design of injuring him in his person, or in his temporal concerns.

of his glory, to pass a final sentence of condemnation or absolution upon the whole world.

6 Your glorying is not good: know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

6 Your priding yourselves in your spiritual gifts; in your leaders; in such an infamous offender; and in the imaginary flourishing state of your church, is far from being right and justifiable; it is exceeding preposterous and unbecoming, injurious and unseasonable, while the church itself is defiled and exposed to the judgments of God, and other members are in danger of being infected by your tolerating such a heinous criminal among you. What! amidst all your boasting of knowledge and understanding, do not ye easily perceive that, as a little leaven diffuses itself through, and sours the whole mass of dough, with which it is mixed; so this single instance, if neglected, and not purged out, will soon corrupt the minds and manners of fellow-members, and one way or other taint and defile the whole church?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

7 Be as diligent and careful then, to cleanse the church from this, and all other scandalous persons and sins, as the Jews are wont to be to clear their houses from all leaven, before they eat the passover, that ye may be a society of new creatures, in whom *old things are passed away, and all things are become new*; (2 Cor. v. 17.) even as ye are by *profession* and *obligation*, and as it is charitably to be believed of the generality of you, ye are in *sincerity* and *truth*, through communion with Christ your head: For he, who in his crucifixion was typified by the paschal lamb, a bone of which was not broken, (*John* xix. 36.) offered himself up as a propitiatory sacrifice to God, for this very purpose, that we who believe in him, might be cleansed from all iniquity, and purified to himself, as a peccoliar people, zealous of good works. (*Tit.* ii. 14.)

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness,

8 Let us therefore see to it, that we celebrate the new testament festival of the Lord's supper, (which he instituted, as a memorial of his Death \*, in the room of the passover) not with a mixture of notorious offenders in our church societies; nor with an allowance of any sin in ourselves, which may be compared to old leaven; because it springs from the original corruption of our nature, and diffuses it's infection, more or less through

#### N O T E.

\* *Keeping the feast*, seems most directly to refer to the Lord's Supper, which may be called the feast, in allusion to the passover; and was very properly instituted instead of that ordinance, which was both commemorative of Israel's deliverance from the destroying angel, and prefiguring the death of Christ;

but it is now superseded by the *Lord's Supper*, as a commemoration of the more glorious antitypical redemption through his blood. And perhaps the apostle went the rather into this allusion, because, as is probable from *chap.* xvi. & compared with this verse, the time of the passover was then near at hand.

ness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

through the whole human race; and because it worked with great prevalence in us formerly, during the days of our unregeneracy, and is every way more offensive to God, disallowable in itself, and pernicious to us, than any leaven in bread, or houses, at the paschal feast ever could be to the *Jews*, or to him in Old Testament times: Nor let us approach this evangelical ordinance, with spirits soured, like leavened bread, with a party and wrathful, contentious and mischievous temper, but with integrity and godly simplicity, (of which unleavened bread may be considered as an emblem) and with a sincere love to the brethren, according to the truth of the gospel.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators:

9 I have thought proper, for want of personal conversation, to caution you \* in the epistolary way, against associating yourselves, in a free and familiar manner †, with people that are addicted to whoredom, lest ye be thought to countenance them in their sin; and lest ye yourselves be brought by degrees to think lightly of it, and be tempted to follow their detestable example.

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortion-

10 Yet my meaning in such a caution is not, that ye should absolutely refuse all manner of civil conversation with the men of this world, who are guilty of whoredom; nor that ye should break off common acquaintance and correspondence with all such, as are of an avaritious temper, over eager and insatiable in their pursuit

#### N O T E S.

\* It is apprehended by some, that the apostle here refers to another epistle, which he had wrote before to the *Corinthians*, though it be now lost, as some other of his writings may be supposed to be; they never having been placed in the canon of the New Testament, contains all that is necessary to the perfection of our rule of faith and practice, and that infinite wisdom designed and has taken care should be preserved to posterity, for the standing use of the church. Others think that he refers to a letter, which he had begun to write before but upon the arrival of messengers to him from the church, he laid it aside, and wrote this; or that he refers to what he had already said in the epistle which he was now writing, and particularly in the former part of this chapter. See Dr. *Hammond's* and *Whitby's* notes. I have formed the paraphrase in a way, that may be applicable to either of these senses; leaving it to the reader to chuse which he pleases.

† It is plain from *ver. 10.* that the Apostle here forbids such companying as was unlawful for them to have with the fornicators of this world; and therefore it cannot be meant either of church communion on one hand, or of having Fellowship with them in their civil

workings the other; for both of these were without doubt, unlawful to be held with infidels and heathens, as well as with scandalous professors of Christ's name: Nor doth he forbid conversing in the religious way to *admonish and reclaim* them, that had fallen into sin, and were under church dealings, or censures, on that account; for the law of charity, and the spiritual ends of such procedures might be best answered by this sort of conversation with them: Nor doth he forbid such converies, as were *not* *constant* necessary by *natural and civil* relations, and engagements in *secular* business, and by the common ties of *humanity*; for that would be to dissolve natural obligations, and the laws of civil society; and would be utterly unsuitable in the benevolent spirit of the gospel, as well as to the proper ends of excommunication itself. (See the note on *ver. 5.*) but the converses forbidden by the apostle, were those that are ordinary, and *not of choice*, or in such a *free, intimate, and familiar* manner with them, as might, in some circumstances, be lawful to be held with the people of the world, when providence casts circumstances into their company, though they be guilty of the sins mentioned in the two following verses.

tortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

suit after riches, and loth to apply any suitable proportions of them to religious and charitable uses; or with such, as transgress the rules of justice, and equity, by fraudulent or forcible gains from those, that they have got into their power; or with such as pay any kind of respect, in a way of religious worship to idols, which is due to none but the only living and true God: For were ye to shun all social conversation with such sort of men as these, which abound among the unconverted *Gentiles*, and especially among your neighbours at *Corinth*, who are so remarkably addicted to all these abominations, it would be, in a manner impossible for you to have any society, or common commerce, in such a sinful world as this.

11 But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat.

11 But, to explain myself now more clearly, the drift of my admonition is, that ye avoid cultivating unnecessary conversation with any one that is guilty of these crimes, and bears the name of a Christian brother as being joined in church fellowship with other professing believers: If any one of this character be found chargeable with fornication, or any kind of uncleanness, or if he be an inordinate lover of money; or if he dishonour God, by joining in idolatrous worship; or be given to wrathful, abusive and opprobrious language; or be a lover of much drinking, and customarily overtaken and intoxicated with strong liquor; or be an oppressor of others in a way of extortion, by rapacious usury, or other methods of taking an advantage of their dependance upon him: As these iniquities, when practised by those that make a solemn profession of Christ, are most highly aggravated, and bring the greatest reproach upon his blessed name, and the foulest scandal upon the church, ye ought to be shy and reserved in your ordinary behaviour towards such an one, and not so much as, unnecessarily, and out of choice, sit down with familiarity at common meals, much less at the Lord's table, with him; that while he observes, your distant carriage towards him, he may see how infamous he has rendered himself, and may be ashamed of his evil ways.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

12 For as to those that are out of the pale of the church, what concern have I, when speaking of ecclesiastical discipline, to forbid such converses with them as the civil offices, secular affairs and relations of life may call you to? Is it not your proper business, as a church, to judge of, and pass sentence against, only those offenders, that are of your own spiritual body? It is of them therefore, and of them only, that I now speak.

13 But

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

13 But as for those flagitious sinners, that are not church members, and have no visible standing or communion with them in the kingdom of Christ, they must be left to the judgment of God; who, in case they continue impenitent, will not suffer them to escape his righteous vengeance, though ye have nothing to do, to pass spiritual censures upon them, or to refuse an affable and friendly behaviour toward them. What I therefore immediately aim at in all this is, that ye not only exclude from your religious community, but likewise from your familiar and chosen conversation, the vile incestuous person, as ye ought to do any brother, that is scandalous in his life.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How melancholy is it to see, and hear of, such scandalous enormities among members of the churches of Christ, as even the heathens themselves would be ashamed of! And how unbecoming is it for any that belong to such churches, to be puffed up with pride, and filled with party zeal, instead of mourning before the Lord, under such humbling circumstances! It is their unquestionable duty to concur in excluding flagrant sinners from their holy communion, not to injure them in any of their temporal affairs; but for their spiritual good, and for the vindication of the honour of Christ, and the preservation of the purity of the church, that they may be as a new and unclavened lump in all religious services, and holy conversation, according to the design of the Redeemer's death, who was sacrificed for them. And as the excommunicating sentence, which is pronounced upon such offenders in the name of the Lord Jesus, is exceeding awful; and its consequences are very happy, or terrible, according as its genuine design takes proper effect upon them, or not. How concerned should they be, who were once in fellowship with them, to behave towards them at such a rate, as, by the blessing of God, may be subservient to the making them sensible, and ashamed of their sin, by keeping at a becoming distance from them, and not conversing in so free and familiar a manner with them, unless for bringing them to repentance, as may be allowable with the men of this world, that are guilty of the like crimes; such as fornication, adultery, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, and extortion! But, as to those wicked persons that are *without*, and never were in communion with the saints; churches have no right to take cognizance of them; but must leave them to the righteous judgment of God, who will call them to a severe account, if they live and die in impenitence and unbelief.

### C H A P. VI.

*The apostle cautions the Corinthians against going to law one with another, especially in heathen courts, 1,—8. Specifies several gross sins, which they were cleansed from, but which, lived and died in, exclude from the kingdom of God, 9,—11. Repeats his caution against uncleanness, as it is a defilement and an abuse of their bodies, which are the members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, and are purchased for God, that, with the whole man, they might glorify him, 12,—20.*

## TEXT.

**D**ARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

<sup>a</sup> Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you,

are

## PARAPHRASE.

**S**INCE then it belongs to you to take cognizance of your own members, and pass proper censures on their immoralities; (*chap. v. 12.*) Is it not a rash, unnecessary, and unwarrantable venture, beyond the rules of prudence, love, and duty, for any of you, who have a matter of controversy with a christian brother about civil affairs, to enter immediately into a law suit against him, and try it in a litigious way before heathen magistrates, who are avowed enemies to christianity, and would rejoice at your quarrelling among yourselves; and from whom impartial justice to its professors is not ordinarily to be expected? Should ye not rather refer such a cause to the decision of some among yourselves, that are persons of a religious and holy character, and may reasonably be supposed to understand things of that nature, and to give righteous judgment about them?

<sup>2</sup> Do ye not apprehend and consider, that, as our blessed Lord told his disciples, *they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*; (*Matth. xix. 28.*) so those, whom he has renewed and sanctified by his spirit, shall have the honour and privilege, at the last day, of being seated in dignity near him, and of concurring with him in his final judiciary sentence upon the ungodly world of mankind? And if the wicked of the earth, great and small, shall be brought before you, as assessors with Christ, when *he shall come with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all*; (*Jude ver. 14, 15.*) Are ye not to be deemed fit, or worthy, to judge and determine about little controversies

## N O T E.

<sup>a</sup> Mr. Locke, who has been followed by some others, supposes that this relates to the case of the incontinent person, which his party, to stop a church censure, pretended was to be tried by the civil magistrate, and which possibly they had brought before a heathen judge, or at least pleaded, that what he had done was lawful, and might be justified before the magistrate.—But what the apostle here speaks of, is reckoned among *the small matters, and things that pertain to this life*; (*ver. 2, 3, 4.*) and he reproves the *Corinthians* for not taking, or putting up wrongs of that nature, and not suffering themselves to be defrauded in them, rather than go to law about them; (*ver. 7.*) which surely he would not have said, with respect to a crime so notoriously infamous, as *was not so much as named among the Gentiles*, *chap. v. 1.* See my paraphrase and notes there, which may be sufficient to take off the force of what that learned expositor has offered to get over the objection, which lies in these words against

his supposition. I therefore take the apostle to refer to *civil causes* of little moment, between man and man, which some of that church had carried into heathen courts: and as he had been discoursing about the church's power and duty, to judge their own members in ecclesiastical concerns, *chap. v. 12.* he passes on to warn them against the scandalous practice of litigious law suits, which some of them had gone into against their brethren, about worldly things of a trifling nature, and that in heathen courts of judicature. But it cannot be concluded from hence that all going to law about matters of considerable importance, is absolutely unlawful, provided it be with a Christian temper, and merely for the maintaining or defending of civil rights and properties, after all other fair and prudent methods have been tried, without effect; and yet this ought to be avoided, as much as possible, among fellow-Christians; and especially members of the same church.

are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are the least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man amongst you? no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

lies of a civil nature, that are of the most trivial consequence, especially when compared with the infinitely more important causes and their issues, which will be decided, and *that* with your consent, in the last day of judgment?

3 Do ye not know that, in the manner but now mentioned, ye shall sit as favourites and approvers, with Christ, in judgement, even upon the fallen angels themselves, when he shall pass a solemn sentence upon them in the great day, to consign them over to the complete and everlasting torments, for which they are now reserved? (2 Pet. ii. 4. and Jude ver 6.) are ye then not sufficient, and proper persons, to settle matters of common right and wrong, between one brother and another, in things relating to this present state and world?

4 If therefore at any time ye have differences one with another, about the temporal affairs of this life, which the parties themselves cannot agree upon; appoint some of the secular brethren to be arbitrators, and umpires between them, even such as are of little account in the church, nor indeed with respect to their natural and acquired parts, or their eminence in piety and holiness; but with respect to the spiritual functions of pastors and teachers, who, for the sake of their office, ought not to intermeddle, like judges and dividers, in secular affairs: (Luke xii. 14.) nay, let such trifling causes, as some of you may have been concerned in, be referred to two or three of the meanest honest christians, of plain sense among you, rather than be brought to pagan courts of judicature\*. However, it is every way wrong for you to be fond of appealing to such magistrates, as, under the notion of their being *Heathens*, are so far to be disesteemed by the church of Christ, as not to be applied to without necessity.

5 I expostulate in this earnest manner with you to shame you out of such an unbecoming conduct, which, I am sorry to say, has been found among you, and is matter of great reproach to you. What! under all your mighty boasts of wisdom and learning, is there really no man of sagacity, or of common prudence among you? No, not so much as one of all your number, that is capable of adjusting debates about *meum* and *tuum*, which arise between your christian brethren, and of compromising things between them?

6. But

#### N O T E.

\* Some read this interrogatively, *Do ye set them to judge, who are of no esteem, or who are set at naught?* (see the *Annotations*) meaning the heathen magistrates the apostle having spoke before, chap. i. 28. of the heathens, as things of naught (*res nihili*). And

so he blames the *Corinthians* for bringing their causes to such sorts of persons as these, whom they rather ought to have the meanest thoughts of, though not as civil magistrates, yet as blind idolatrous heathens.

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

6 But, as though there were none of such a character among you, I perceive that one brother commences a law suit against another, of the same common faith, and of the same church and communion with himself; and prosecutes him with the utmost rigour, and *that* in the courts of *infidels*, to the great scandal of christianity, and of it's holy professors.

7 There is therefore (ὅλας ἁπταται) most certainly a very blameable defect in your management; for as much as one takes the advantage of law against another, and the rest connive at it, without a due regard to any proper rules of christian prudence, and forbearance, or of brotherly love and friendship, and highly to the dishonour of our great Lord and Master, who is the Prince of Peace, and in the days of his flesh was meek and lowly in heart. Why do ye not rather put up injuries, and suffer yourselves to be deprived of what, in strictness, might be your due, than expose one another, and the name of Christ himself, to contempt and insult in the open courts of the unbelieving and prophane? this would be every way better, and more agreeable to your spiritual relation to him, and to each other.

8 But instead of bearing injuries with meekness and patience, I find many of you yourselves are guilty, even of injustice and frauds, and *that* in your dealings with your brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and without controul from those, that should interpose to prevent it. How contrary is this to your christian character and profession, and to what your temper ought to be!

9, 10 What! are ye not fully convinced of, and do ye never reflect upon, so plain and awful a truth as this, that, whatever peoples professions be, the impenitent and unbelieving, who live under the guilt and dominion of any sin, are utterly unfit for, have no title to, and shall not be admitted to an enjoyment of, the blessings and privileges of that kingdom of grace, which God has erected in this world, nor of that glorious kingdom, which he has prepared in the heavens, to be *the inheritance of the saints in light*? (Col. i. 12.) pray take heed that none of you deceive your own souls with imaginary notions, hypocritical pretences, or presumptuous confidences. It is certain that neither single men or women, who unlawfully cohabit together; nor the worshippers of images, or of false gods; nor defilers of the marriage-bed, by impure conversation with any other, whither single person, husband, or wife; nor males or females of lascivious tempers and practices; nor those

that;



that are guilty of the most unnatural detestable sin, for which the men of *Sodom* were destroyed by fire from heaven; nor such as invade other peoples property by open force, or private stealth and frauds; nor persons of a covetous temper, that are never satisfied with what they have of the riches of this world, nor willing to part with so much of them, as are requisite for promoting the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the good of others; nor the lovers, and excessive drinkers, or bibbers of strong liquors, to the intoxicating of their brains, or impairing their health, or unfitting them for business and solid devotion; nor such as injuriously blast the reputation of their neighbours; nor unjust oppressors of those that are under their power by exacting from them more than is legally due\*: Do ye not know, as ye ought and surely must, that none of these sorts of sinners, living and dying such, without repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, shall ever be admitted to the blessings of grace in this world, or to the inheritance of eternal life in the next, which consists of riches and grandeur, honours and delights, incomparably superior to all that pertain to the most flourishing kingdoms upon earth.

72 And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

11 And permit me to remind you, for your humbling and caution, and for exciting your admiration and praise of free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace, that in the days of your unregeneracy, and estrangement from Christ, one or other, and perhaps most, if not all of these black and odious crimes, were predominant in yourselves; such monsters of wickedness were, at least some of you. But, O rich and astonishing mercy! blessed be God for it; ye, who sincerely believe, are now happily cleansed, or purged from the guilt of your sins: ye are now delivered from their defiling and domineering power, and made partakers of God's holiness; and ye are now brought into a state of favour and acceptance with him, as righteous into eternal life†: Ye

#### N O T E S.

\* Here is a recital of sins, for which *Corinth* was infamous, and which are notorious transgressions of both tables of the moral law. *Idolatry* is a sin against the first and second commandments: *Fornication* *Adultery*, and *Effeminacy*, and the *unnatural sin*, are forbidden by the seventh: *Theft* and *Extortion*, by the eighth: *Rebelling*, by the ninth: And *Covetousness*, *Drunkenness*, *Uncleanliness*, and all inordinate desires, by the tenth.

† As justification is more than a bare pardon, which consists only in a discharge from guilt and condemnation, without a title to

the blessedness of eternal life, I have considered believers being washed in a distinct view from their being justified, as well as from their being sanctified, because the most usual interpretation of their being washed, as relating to their being cleansed from the filth of sin, seems to be more coincident with their being sanctified: But, perhaps, their being washed may be of a more general signification, inclusive both of their being sanctified and justified, which may be taken as explanatory of the latter, in which they were washed: And though their being justified is spoken of, in the

Ye are, I say, now washed from your sins, and justified in God's sight, through faith in the name of the only Lord and Saviour, in virtue of his atoning blood, and meritorious righteousness; (*Rev. i. 5.* and *Acts xiii. 38, 39.*) and ye are sanctified by the renewing, purifying, and quickening influence of the spirit of our gracious God, (*2 Thess. ii. 13.*) even your God and mine, who, for this very purpose, has shed the Holy Ghost upon you abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (*Tit. iii. 5, 6.*) and who signified all these benefits and sealed the promises of them, in your Christian baptism.

11 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

12 But to insist a little more particularly on the sin of simple fornication, which I have ranked among the most enormous crimes; (*ver. 9.*) but which some of you may have too light thoughts of, as if it were as allowable, as eating every kind of meat without distinction; because it is abtaining from both is alike enjoined to the *Gentile* converts, by the famous decree at *Jerusalem* (*Acts xv. 29*) As to meats †, which that decree restrained the use of, only for a season, and with relation to such circumstances as might make eating them offensive to the *Jews*, (see the note on *Acts xv. 29.*) I would say, All things, which in themselves considered, are neither directly, nor by just consequence, enjoined, or forbidden, either by the nature of things, or by the authority of Christ, are lawful for me to use, or not, as occasions require; but in some circumstances as particularly when it would give offence to others, it is not adviseable, profitable, (*οὐ συμφέρει*) or conducive to any valuable purpose, but may be very injurious, to indulge myself in the use of them, without considering the consequence: All things, of such an indifferent nature in themselves, are allowable for me to do, or

not

#### N O T E.

the middle of the verse, before their being justified; yet in the name of the Lord Jesus, by whom they were justified, is mentioned, in the close of the verse, before the Spirit of our God, by whom they were sanctified; which shews that we cannot always depend merely upon the order of expressions, to determine the order, in which these benefits are bestowed: And as washing is supposed by many to have a reference to baptism, I have given a turn to the paraphrase, which may be applied to all, that is signified and sealed by that ordinance, with relation to our being washed by the blood and Spirit of Christ, in our pardon and sanctification, and being made partakers of the righteousness of faith, which circumcision was said to be the seal of, in justification, *Rom. iv. 11.*

† It appears from *ver. 13* that the apostle reckoned the eating of any kind of meats, whether such as were offered to idols, or such as were forbidden in the *Levitical* law, among the things, which, under the gospel state, were in themselves lawful, according to what he declared on other occasions concerning them both: *Chap. viii.* and *Rom. xiv. 14—18.* And the partisans of the ineffectual person might probably pretend, that, on his side, he was only guilty of simple fornication, and that this was no more unlawful, than the eating of those meats. This, in my apprehension, sets the reasoning and connection of this part of the apostle's discourse, in a juster light, than any other way, that I have met with of accounting for it.

not, as I please, according to my apprehensions of the good or bad ends, that might be promoted by it; but I would not suffer myself to be enslaved by an ungovernable passion for them; nor, were they to be imposed upon me, as necessary things, in point of conscience, by any merely human injunction, would I submit to the arbitrary authority of any man whatsoever; (*ὅτι οὐκ ἐθέλω ὑποτασσάμενοι ἀνθρώπῳ κτλ.*) but would practise them, or not, just, as the reasons of things require.

12 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

13 In this view, we are to consider meats that are offered to idols; and all those that were forbidden in the *Levitical* law; for the original design of all wholesome food was to nourish the body, by filling and refreshing the stomach and bowels with it: and the belly, in the animal frame, was formed for receiving and digesting it, and separating nutritious juices from it: But these are things of so perishing a nature, and of so little consequence to a man's truest happiness, that God will soon put an end to both, and to their mutual relation one to the other; so that we shall neither hunger nor thirst in the heavenly world, (*Rev. vii. 16.*) nor have any occasion for meat or drink there. But now as to fornication that is a sin of a quite different nature: For in forming the human body, which will subsist in another state, after the belly and food, and their relation to each other, shall be destroyed, God's design was not, that it should be prostituted in this world to impure and promiscuous embraces; but that it should be used for himself, and for the honour of the Lord Jesus, who died to redeem and save it, as well as the soul; and that he, as the head and Saviour of the church, might have the body, as well as soul, under his dominion and disposal, in order to its glorifying him here, and being glorified with him hereafter.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

14. And, as the pledge, earnest, and security of its glorious state in the world to come, God the Father raised up the dead body of the Lord Jesus, as the head of the church, and the first fruits of them that sleep in him; and we may assuredly conclude from thence that, by the working of the same almighty power, he will raise up the dead bodies of every one of us, who are the living members of Christ, to a blessed and glorious immortality, after his likeness. (*Phil. iii. 21.*)

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the

15 Do you not know that your bodies themselves, being a constituent part of your persons, are united to Christ as members, of which he is the vital head, and which will sleep in Jesus, and be raised up to glory with him? (*1 Theff. iv. 14, 17.*) Would it then be fit, or decent

the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

decent; nay, would it not be monstrously shameful for me, or any one who was vitally united to Christ, like the members of the natural body to their head, to make such a vile use of the members of his mystical body, as to alienate them from his service and honour, and as it were, rend them off from him, and turn them, into the members of a lewd woman, by committing whoredom with her? Far be it (*non igitur*) from any that bear the Christian name, to be guilty of such a flagitious crime; so dishonourable to the holy Jesus, and to the law of marriage, which is sanctified and confirmed by him. (*Matth. xix. 5, 6.*)

16 What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two (saith he) shall be one flesh.

16. Strange! that ye, who make such high pretences to knowledge, should not understand and consider, that the man who is united, in criminal affections and conversation, with an harlot, degrades himself so far, as to be, as it were, but one body with her? For, as our Lord has said of a husband and his wife, (*Matth. xix. 6.*) that *they are no more two but one flesh*; so a man who unlawfully cohabits with a woman, becomes, though in an exceeding vile and dishonourable sense, one flesh with her.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

17 But on the contrary, the believer, who is vitally united to the Lord Jesus, as his head and husband, so closely adheres, and is, as it were, so compactly cemented to him, (*συνσπαιρμενος το κυρίῳ*) as to be partaker of, and animated and actuated by, the same divine spirit, which dwelt, with a fulness of gifts and graces above measure, in Christ himself, (*John iii. 34.*) and is communicated to all his members, according to the measure of his gift? (*Eph. iv. 7, &c.*) and so they are though not essentially, yet mystically one spirit with him, which throws the indignity, offered to the body, upon him, with whom they are one spirit.

18 Flee Fornication. Every sin that a man doth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

18 Whatever therefore ye do, flee from the sin of uncleanness, in all its forms, with dread and abhorrence, with the utmost speed, and with all your might as a bird would flee from the snare of the fowler; don't so much as parley with it; but resolutely abandon it, and keep at the remotest distance from it! watch and pray against all inclinations, enticements, and tendencies to it, and all appearances and occasions of: For every other sin, which a man commits only against God and his neighbour, terminates upon an object out of himself, \*; and don't immediately pollute his own body,

#### N O T E.

though

\* Every sin here opposed to Fornication, must, I think, be understood with a restriction to such sort of sins as are committed merely against God and others: For though ex-

positions commonly take notice of *gluttony* and *drunkenness*, as included in those other sins, because they are an abuse of food and drink: yet since they are likewise an abuse of a man's own

though it doth his soul; but he, who is guilty of whoredom, not ooly defiles his soul, and sins against God and his neighbour, but against his own body too, as that is thereby debased, and unworthily sacrificed to the most brutish and abominable lusts.

19 What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and are not your own?

19 What shall I say further? Do you not know and consider, according to what has been before hinted, (*chap. iii. 16.*) that your body, as an essential part of the human person, which is united to Christ, is a sacred, dedicated and appropriated habitation of God the Holy Ghost †, which he has taken possession of, and dwells in, by peculiar relation and operation, diffusing light and grace within it, and adorning with his special presence and with much more excellent tokens and manifestations of it, than ever *Solomon's* temple had of God's residence there: This divine indwelling spirit, who proceeds from the Father and Son, but is undivided from them, ye have and hold by the free gift of God, for the glory of his own great name, as the fountain of all grace, through Jesus Christ; as well as that ye have the body itself from him, as its Creator: And being thus not only formed by, and for him, as the God of nature, but also consecrated to him, as the God of grace, and so his *habitation through the spirit*, (*Eph. ii. 22.*) ye are no longer your own property, or at your own disposal, to use your bodies according to your own brutal inclinations in contradiction to his holy nature and will.

20 For, to add one consideration more, ye are redeemed from the curse of the law, and the wrath to come, from sin and Satan, from infamy, slavery, and ruin, and are purchased for the service and enjoyment of the holy and blessed God, by the precious blood of his Son; (*1 Pet. i. 19.* and *Rev. v. 9.*) and so ye are bought at the dearest rate for himself, and for a glorious resurrection of the body to eternal life: Let it therefore be your diligent care and concern, through divine grace, to yield your bodies, and all their members, as well as your souls, and all their faculties, as instruments of righteousness to God, which is your reasonable service; (*Rom. vi. 13.* and *xii. 1.*) that ye may never alienate and debase his peculiar right and property, by impurity in the thoughts and inclinations of the heart, or in the acts of the body; but may in all things glorify

#### N O T E.

own body, it can scarce be said of them, that they are *without the body*, or are not *sin against a man's own body*; and even fornication itself is an abuse of other's, as well as of one's own body.

*chap. iii. 16. 17.* and *the temple of the living God*, *1 Cor. vi. 16.* he here styles *the temple of the Holy Ghost*; which shews that the Holy Spirit is the *living God*; and a *temple* always supposed, and is relative to, an inhabiting deity.

† What the apostle calls *the temple of God*,

in your spirit,  
which are God's.

glorify him with both \*, which he has now a peculiar and endearing title to, by redeeming love, added to that of creation and providence; and which ought to be devoted, employed, and improved intirely, unre-servedly, and for ever, to his glory, and according to his will.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

What an honour has Christ put upon the saints, in making their bodies, as well as souls, his members, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, which he will raise to immortal blessedness! And what dignity and glory will they appear in, when they shall sit, like justices on the bench, with the great judge of all; and the rest of mankind, yea, the fallen angels themselves, shall be arraigned, tried, and cast at his bar; and the attending court shall say, with solemn acclamation, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus!" (Rev. xvi. 5.) How highly therefore doth it become them now to adjust controversies about civil affairs among themselves, by referring them to the arbitration of their own honest friends, rather than give way to a litigious temper, and expose religion to its enemies, by going to law one with another before them! What a shame is it to a church of Christ, if there be none among their lay-brethren, that are wise and prudent enough to engage in making up such differences! And, O how exceedingly are such church members to blame, who are so far from putting up wrongs, as to be themselves guilty of cheating and injuring others, and that their Christian brethren! Whatever such persons professions and pretences be, they do but deceive their own souls, if they imagine that they shall be admitted to the kingdom of heaven, while they allow themselves in this, or any other kind of wickedness, such as uncleanness, idolatry, covetousness, drunkenness, defamation, and extortion. But, O how great is the difference between what true believers once were, in the days of their unregeneracy, and now are, through the riches of surprizing, sovereign, and distinguishing grace! They were under the power of damning sin, and some of them notoriously vile; but now they are pardoned and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of their God. And when they are brought into this happy state, how easy may they be about all things of an indifferent nature, like Jewish meats! They are lawful to them, and may be used without scruple by them; only Christian prudence should direct the expediency of them; and they should take heed that their consciences be never enslaved, by human impositions, to make them necessary, and that they never go into an immoderate indulgence of sensitive appetites for meat and drink, which will perish with the animal frame of the body, and be entirely useless in another world. But with what detestation should they fly from the sin of fornication, and from every thing that has the least tendency towards it! This, how slightly soever some may think of it, is a sin directly contrary to the law of nature, and of marriage, and to the noble purposes for which their bodies were originally designed, and to which those of the saints shall be raised, in conformity to Christ's glorious body: It is contrary to their relation to him, as his members, dishonourable to his name, and debasing to themselves, to join their bodies to an harlot, and make them one flesh with her's: It is contrary to that intimate union, into which they are taken to their holy Head and Husband, as one spirit with him; and contrary to the dignity of their bodies, and to the

### N O T E.

\* As Christ is the Redeemer, who paid the price for us, we are certainly his, as well as God the Father's peculiar property; and as it is on the foot of his redemption, that we are said to be God's, it naturally follows, that Christ is included in the God, whose we are, and whom we should glorify with our bodies

and spirits, which are his; and as, in the preceding verse, believers were said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, he also is to be considered, together with the Father and Son, as the God, who has a peculiar property in us, and is to be glorified by us. See the note on that verse.

the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in them, as his temple : And it is contrary to the right of purchase by Jesus Christ, who hath bought both their bodies and souls with the price of his precious blood, that they might not be their own lords and masters ; but might glorify God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with their bodies and spirits, which are his.

## C H A P. VII.

*The apostle proceeds to answer several questions, that had been sent to him ; and, beginning with what had been proposed about marriage, he shews, that though in some cases it might be best not to enter into that state ; yet, as it is God's ordinance to be a remedy against fornication, it is to be chosen by such as have strong propensions to that sin, 1,—4. That married Christians should not seek to part with their unbelieving consorts, one being sanctified by the other, for preserving the federal holiness of their children, 10,—16. That persons, in any civil station, should ordinarily be satisfied to abide in that, in which they were first called to the faith of Christ, 17,—24. That it was most desirable, on account of the then perilous days, for single people to continue so, unless there were any pressing reasons to the contrary ; and that persons of all stations ought to sit loose from every thing of this transitory world, as far as it would be an hindrance to them in the service of God, 25,—35. That great prudence should be used in the disposal of virgins, 36,—38. And that widows should be very careful how they marry again, and especially that it be only in the Lord, 39,—40.*

## TEXT.

**N**OW concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me : It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

## PARAPHRASE.

**N**OW, to speak to the questions proposed to me in the letter, which I received from you \*, and to begin with those, that relate to matrimony ; I say, in general, that the unmarried state, considered as free from incumbrances, and attended with the fewest inconveniences and troubles, (*ver.* 28, 35.) especially in times of persecution, (*ver.* 26.) is, in that view of it, to be preferred to a state of wedlock.

2 But

## NOTE.

\* It appears from the manner of the apostle's introducing this part of his epistle, that he had received a letter from such members of the church at Corinth, as adhered to him, about several points of conscience in debate among them, of which they desired a solution, as what they would abide by : Accordingly he sets himself to answer them, in this and the following chapters, beginning with their questions about marriage, in an agreeable connection with what he had last been saying against fornication. Had we the letter before us, which they wrote to him, we might form a better judgment of the beauty and propriety of his thoughts on all those points, than we now can, for want of know-

ing its contents, any further than may be gathered from his reply, and from the very scanty remains of the history of those times. As to the article of marriage, which he considers in this chapter, it is probable that there were some of the *Gentile* converts, who inclined to the *Pythagorean* notion against that ordinance, as though it were an enemy to the intellectual life ; (see Dr. *Hibbert* on the place) and that there were others among the *Jewish* converts, who sided with the doctrine of their schools, which taught, that every man at the age of twenty was bound to marry, and delivered various opinions about restraints from the marriage-bed. See Dr. *Lights*'s works, Vol. ii. p. 757, 759.

2 Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again that Satan tempt you

2 But yet, as marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, (Heb. xiii. 4.) and as it is appointed of God, among other reasons, for preventing the abominable sin of fornication, together with all sorts of uncleanness, which I have been but now so particularly remonstrating against, (*chap. v. and chap. vi. 13,—20.*) I would advise every man, whose natural constitution, and the temptations of his situation may be too strong inducements to that iniquity, (*ver. 9.*) to take, and keep to a wife of his own, (*τοῦ ἰαυτοῦ γυναικὸς ἑαυτοῦ*) who shall be his peculiar property; and every woman, in like circumstances, to accept, and cleave to a husband, who shall be hers only, (*τοῦ ἰδίου ἀνδρὸς*) and not another's.

3 And when they are joined together in lawful wedlock, the husband, to prevent irregular desires in himself after other women, and in his wife after other men, should take proper opportunities of testifying his peculiar affection to her, in a due performance of the conjugal duty, which he owes to her, and her only, as may be most agreeable to her inclinations: And the wife, on her part, should be ready to do the like towards her husband.

4 For as they have given themselves one to the other, the wife has no longer a right, or authority, (*οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει*) to dispose of her own body, by withholding it, in fit seasons, from her husband; much less by prostituting it to any other man; it being a property sacred to her husband: And on the other side, the husband, in like manner, has no right, or authority, (*οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει*) to withhold his own body from his wife; much less to gratify any other woman, or his own pleasure, in impure embraces of her; it being the inviolable property of his wife.

5 Whosoever of you therefore are in the matrimonial state, see that ye be just and kind one to the other, and that ye do not necessarily deprive one another of the duty of that relation \*; (*οὐκ ἀπορριπτὴ*) unless it be by mutual agreement on some special solemn occasions, to the end that ye may abstain from all gratifications of nature, in order to your being the more suitably and intently engaged in the religious exercises of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; and, when such seasons are over, ye may discretionally return to a sober and temperate use of each

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle's reasoning in this and the preceding verses evidently makes against *Poligamy*, and against *vows of celibacy*, or of *perpetual virginity*: And the chastity of his style is very remarkable, to teach us to be as modest as possible in expressing things, that might tend to raise indecent motions in the

heart, when we are obliged to speak of them, as I am forced to do tho' with great reluctance, in this paraphrase, and hope have done in the chastest manner; in which it likewise ought to be read, without *foolish jesting*, as such parts of the sacred scripture too often are, by persons of *vain minds*.



you not for  
your incontinency.

6 But I speak  
this by permission,  
and not of com-  
mandment.

7 For I would  
that all men were  
even as myself:  
but every man  
hath his proper  
gift of God, one  
after this manner,  
and another after  
that.

8 I say there-  
fore to the un-  
married and wi-  
dows, It is good  
for them if they  
abide even as I.

9 But, if they  
cannot contain,  
let them marry:  
for it is better to  
marry than to  
burn.

each other again; lest the devil should take an opportunity, during too long and disagreeable an abstinence, to tempt you to some criminal conversation with other persons, thro' the workings of an unchaste disposition in yourselves.

6 But what I say in these cases, is by way of concession and advice, which I am allowed to offer, as an inspired apostle, with respect to what, in different circumstances, may be lawfully done, and may be most agreeable to your holy profession; and not by any express command of Christ, (see the note on *ver.* 10.) as to what is absolutely necessary for this, or that particular person.

7 For I could indeed heartily wish, that all my unmarried christian friends were as easy and contented, as I myself am, in a single state of life \*: But they must be left to consult their own tempers, dispositions, and situations; since every one of them has the peculiar frame of his natural constitution, and proper measures of assistance for the government of it; by the gift of God, as the author of both, some in one way, and others in another, for their different trial and improvement, and for displaying the power of religion in its various forms of working in them respectively, whether they alter their condition, or not.

8 I therefore only say to bachelors and maidens, widowers and widows, that, in these perilous times, it is really most eligible for them, if they, like me, can do it with safety, to keep themselves unmarried †, as I do myself, for prudential reasons, while I find no inconveniences, but manifold advantages for the service of God in it.

9 But if their animal inclinations are too strong and fervent to be restrained, and kept within due bounds, by all the grace they have received, without great uneasiness and disturbance to themselves; let them prudently marry some suitable person, lest temptations should, one time or other, prove too hard for them: For it is certainly far better, in point of wisdom, duty, and comfort, for any one to marry, than to be under  
the

#### N O T E S.

\* I take this to be the apostle's sense, rather than, as the stream of commentators carries it, that he wished all men were unmarried as he himself was: For that would have been inconsistent both with God's ordinance of marriage, and with the continuance of the church, and of the world, for time to come; and as far as he found any benefit in a single life, for which he wished it to others, that is sufficiently expressed in the next verse.

† Some have thought that the apostle himself was a widower; because, speaking of such, he here puts himself in, saying, *it is good for them, if they abide even as I*; and because he, having been a conscientious, strict, and zealous Pharisee, had probably married in his younger days, according to the doctrine of the Jewish schools, which made it a sin to continue single after twenty years old. See the note on *ver.* 1.

the power of tormenting, inflaming, and impure desires after unlawful enjoyments.

10 And unto the married I command, let not I. but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband :

10 And as to another of your questions about married people, both of which are believers; though some of them may be too ready to fall in with what they have been wont to hear from the Jewish rabbies, about the allowableness of divorces on trivial occasions, (see Dr. Lightfoot on *Matth.* v. 31.) I declare, (*απαγγισας*) not as from myself, nor yet as what I have received by immediate inspiration, which in this case there was no need of \* ; but as what our Lord himself has expressly commanded, (*Matth.* v. 32. and *xix.* 6, 9.) and has fixed as a binding law upon all his disciples, that no wife should voluntarily separate herself, or be divorced from her husband, for any differences that may rise between them; unless it be on account of adultery.

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband : and let not the husband put away his wife.

11 But if upon some pet, dislike, or quarrel, she should go away from her husband, or he should dismiss her for any other cause than Christ has allowed of, she ought, by all means, to resolve against, and keep herself from marrying another man, which would be utterly unlawful; (*Matth.* *xix.* 9.) or rather, it is her duty to do all that in her lies, to get the breach made up between her husband and herself, to regain his favour, and lay aside her own resentments, that they may live amicably together again, as becometh saints : And it is the incumbent duty of the husband not to divorce his wife, while she is willing to live with him, and is faithful to his bed.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord, if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and the

12 But as to others among you, that were married to heathens, or unbelievers, before they themselves were converted; and may now be in doubt, whether they ought still to continue in the conjugal relation with them, because under the *Mosaic* law, the Jews were obliged

#### N O T E.

\* There was no need of immediate inspiration as to this point, which Christ had so clearly and expressly determined, as there was with respect to others, which he had said nothing about; there having been no occasion for it then, and he having left them to be settled by his apostles, as circumstances might arise : Nor is there any necessity of understanding the apostle to mean merely his own private opinion, when he said, *ver. 6. I speak by permission*, and *ver. 12. I speak, not the Lord*; and *ver. 25. I have no commandment from the Lord*; yet I give my judgment as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; For all this may very well be taken to signify, that what he desired, under these terms of speech, was by inspiration, in dis-

tinction from, and by way of addition to, what our Lord himself had mentioned, in the days of his ministry; accordingly he speaks of himself, with a reference to these things, as *having the spirit of God*, (*ver. 40.*) But if, as some would have it, his meaning was, that he spoke those things, as his own private sentiments, and not by divine suggestion; this shews his great honesty and faithfulness, in giving such plain notice of what he delivered only as his private thoughts, and carries strong evidence, that, when he gave no intimations of that kind, he is to be understood, as speaking by inspiration of the spirit, according to what he says in opposition to false teachers, *ver. 40.* See the note there.

be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now

bliged, at a time of general reformation, to put away their idolatrous wives \*; (*Ezra x. 3, &c.*) I declare, by revelation of the spirit, our Lord himself having left no express commandment by word of mouth about this point, that if any christian brother be wedded to a wife, who, after his conversion, continues an idolatress, or unbeliever, and she be nevertheless willing to cohabit with him in a friendly and peaceable manner, as before, he ought not to abandon her, merely on account of religion.

13 And if any converted woman was before married to an husband, who remains in unbelief, and yet is still willing to live in an honest, decent, and loving manner with her, as man and wife, she ought not to go away from him, as if the bonds of matrimony were broke between them, only because, through his want of religion, they cannot walk together as heirs of the grace of life.

14 For as, unto the pure, all relations and enjoyments of this life are pure, (*Tit. i. 15.*) the husband, who continues an infidel, is so far sanctified, or separated to a holy use, (*1<sup>o</sup> τῷ ὁσίων*) in or by his believing wife, and by means of her credibly professed faith and holiness, (they being one flesh, (*Matth. xix. 5.*) as not to deprive her of the covenant privileges, which belong to the visible people of God, and their seed; (*Gen. xvii. 7.*) and the unconverted wife is in like manner sanctified for covenant use, (*τῷ ἁγίῳ*) in or by her believing husband; and by means of his regularly professed faith and holiness, and of her conjugal relation to him: Otherwise those of your children, which descend from a father and mother, one of which is a christian, and the other not, would be in the same condition, as to the privileges and blessings that belong to the visible church, and to the external administration of the covenant with the children of parents, both of which are heathens, and so out of the pale of the church, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and by no means to be owned

#### N O T E.

\* The Israelites marrying the daughters of idolatrous nations, was in direct contradiction to the well known, express, and severe prohibition of God's law. *Deut. vii. 3, 4.* But the believer and unbeliever, spoken of by the apostle, are supposed to have been married, while they were both in a state of heathenism, or of unbelief. That case therefore, was very different from this, on the religious foot; and it was so, furthermore,

on a political account, as the Jews, nationally considered, were under God's immediate government, as their king, and were to be kept entirely distinct from all the idolatrous nations round about them: And though it would be contrary to the duty, comfort, and edification of christians to marry or believers, *ver. 39.* yet it would not make the marriage itself null and void. See also the note on *ver. 10.*

now are they holy.

ed as a holy seed \*: But now, since the unbelieving parent is thus sanctified in and by the other, who believes, their offspring are externally, relatively, and federally holy, as a seed visibly separated and appropriated to the Lord, and so entitled to all the privileges of the covenant, that they are capable of in their infancy, as much as if both father and mother were professing believers.

12 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart

15 But if the unbelieving husband, or wife, is so offended at the other's embracing Christ and the gospel, as for that reason only to go away, and absolutely resolve against living together any more, as man and wife; let such take their own course, at their peril, after all prudent, kind, and proper methods have been tried, in vain

### N O T E.

\* The terms (*ἀσέβητος*) *unclean*, and (*ἅγιος*) *holy*, occur almost numberless times in the *seventy*, and in the New Testament; but I do not find that they are ever once used to signify *illegitimate* and *legitimate*, which is the sense that some would here put upon them: And as the apostle was speaking of persons already married, and marriage is a civil ordinance of the God of nature, there was no room to doubt, whether the children of such unbelieving and believing parents were *legitimate*, or not, since that depends entirely on the legitimacy of the marriage, and not at all on the religious character of the husband and wife, whether one, or both, or neither of them, were christians or no. Nor is it to be supposed, that *unclean* and *holy*, in this passage, is to be understood of *real*, *personal*, and *internal* uncleanness and holiness: For the children of believers are in a moral sense, as unclean by nature, as the children of other people, see Job xiv. 1, —4. and xxv. 4. *Psal.* li. 5. and *Eph* ii. 3. and it cannot be said of *all* the children of believers, any more than of adult baptized professors, that they are renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; since the event in both shews, that they are not all circumcised in heart, or that they are not *Israel*, which are of *Israel*. (*Rom.* ii. 28, 29. and ix. 6.) But *unclean* and *holy* are manifestly to be taken here, in that well known, and familiar sense in which the church of *Israel*, and their seed, by virtue of their visible relation to God, as his covenant people, were called *a holy people*, and *a holy seed*, in distinction from the heathen nations, which were styled *unclean*, as being out of the pale of the church, and excluded from the privileges and blessings of God's covenant. See *Deut.* vii. 6. *Ezra.* ix. 2. *Isa.* vi. 13. and lii. 1. and lxi. 12. And thus the parents and children of the visible church are called *holy*, *Rom.* xi. 16. and the unconverted *Gentiles* are represented as *unclean*, in *Peter's* vision of the sheet, *Acts*

x. 14. compared with *ver.* 29. when therefore the infants of visible believers are baptized, it is no more setting a seal to a blank, than when that ordinance is administered to persons, who never were baptized before, upon their own profession of faith and repentance, but were not really partakers of those graces: For the proper ground of baptizing one, or the other, does not lie in a *certainty*, which no minister can have, that they are really endued with the grace of God, and so *intimately* in covenant with him, but in their *visible* covenant relation to him, as that is manifested by a credible profession of faith in adult persons, and by God's promise to them and their seed; for which reason, I think, the faith and holiness of parents are to be considered, as *credibly professed* by them, in order to the entailing of a relative, federal holiness on their children, and entitling them to baptism. And as we have a reasonable ground of hope for the salvation of such professing believers, as continue, living and dying, to be visibly in covenant with God; so we have, that their seed, dying in infancy, shall be saved: For since they did not live so long, as to be capable of renouncing the gracious covenant, which God made with their parents, and with them, we may comfortably consider them, as in the hands of a *covenant-God*, whose faithfulness engages him to continue to be so to them, that were not suffered to reject him by unbelief, and so, not to mention the great encouragement they would have to lay hold on God's covenant, were they to grow up to years of maturity, there is vast difference between them, and the dying infants of unbelievers and heathens, which must be left to the *uncovenanted* mercy of God; and what ground of hope there is in *this*, let those christians consider, who would set aside God's promise of being a *God to his people and their seed*, as having no relation to *spiritual* privileges and benefits, nor any place under the gospel dispensation.

part. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

14 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

15 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and so ordain I in all churches.

16 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncir-

vain, to prevent it. A christian brother, or sister, in such a case is not tied down to the hardship of continuing the conjugal relation with one, who, in effect, irreclaimably breaks the matrimonial bond, and defeats all its ends, much less to enslave his, or her own conscience to the perverse humour of the unbelieving relative, for the sake of preventing a separation between them: Only it is to be remembered, that God has directed and obliged us, christians, to follow after peace in every natural and civil, as well as religious relation and therefore such ought to do their utmost, consistent with truth and holiness, to engage even infidel consorts, to live in an amicable manner with them.

16 For, still further to enforce this duty, how do you know, O believing wife, whether by still continuing to dwell in love, meekness, and chastity, with your unbelieving husband, you may not be an instrument in the spirit's hand, of winning him over to the faith of Christ, and so saving his soul? (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) Or how do you know, O believing husband, whether you may not be 'a like happy instrument, in due time, of converting your wife? Do not despair of this; since that God, who has changed one of your hearts, and had brought you into so near a relation to each other, while ye were both in a state of infidelity, can sanctify it so far, as to turn it into an effectual means of salvation to your, as yet, unbelieving mate.

17 But whether the event, as to that, may answer your desire, or not; Let me take this occasion to exhort all among you to consider, that as God, in his providence, has dealt out various states, conditions, and relations of life, to every one of you respectively; and as, while each of you was situated in one or another of them, the Lord Jesus called him to the faith and fellowship of the gospel; so he should labour, by divine grace, to behave in a becoming manner, suitable to his station, without imagining that, by his religion, he is excused from any of the duties which belong to it: And this is what I lay down as a general rule, for order's sake, in all the churches of the saints, with respect to other cases, as well as that, which I have been now insisting upon.

18 Thus, with regard to *religious* circumstances of an external nature, was any of you a circumcised Jew, when God called him by his grace to the knowledge of Christ? Let him not regret it, or wish that he had never been circumcised, as though he were the worse for that. On the contrary, was any of you called to the faith

uncircumcised : is any called in uncircumcision? let him not become circumcised.

faith and hope of the gospel, while he was an uncircumcised *Gentile*? Let him not be uneasy about *that*, or think the worse of his state, because he has not this mark of distinction in his flesh; which, under a former dispensation of the covenant, was put upon God's professing people; nor let him now want to be circumcised, how much soever some *Jewish* zealots would press it upon him: Neither of these circumstances make any alteration, with respect to the privileges and benefits of true believers, under the gospel dispensation.

19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

19 As to circumcision in the flesh, on one hand, which the *Jews* received before conversion; and as to not being circumcised, on the other, which was the case of the *Gentiles*; neither of these are of any avail in Christianity; no man is either the more, or the less accepted of God for either of them: but the main thing is to see to it, that your faith work by love; (*Gal* v. 6.) and so prove itself to be genuine and sincere, in a conscientious and chearful obedience to the moral commandments of the law of God, as becomes new creatures. (*Gal* vi. 15.)

20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

20 So again, with respect to the civil stations and relations of this world, let every one be satisfied to continue in that state in which God has placed him in the kingdom of providence, before he called him into his kingdom of grace, which is designed to make no alteration, with regard to the duties that result from the several situations of secular life, but to enforce the practice of them in such a way, as may be most to the glory of God.

21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

21 As particularly, was you in the capacity and quality of a servant, or even of a slave, to some master according to the flesh, who had bought, or otherwise acquired you to be his property! don't trouble yourself about that, as if you were ever a whit the less acceptable to God on it's account, or as if your Christianity were blemished by it, or it were inconsistent with your duty towards your great Lord and Master in heaven, or with your holy profession of his name and your spiritual privileges in communion with him: Only if providence favour you with an opportunity of getting your freedom by any fair means, thankfully accept of it, and faithfully improve it, as the more desirable condition, in which you may have time at your own command, and better advantages for religious exercises: But, be this as it will, don't discourage, or distress yourselves about it.

22 For he that is called in the Lord

22 For, in opposition to the higher degrees of secular callings, he who while in a state of vassalage to men

Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free-man likewise also; he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

men, was called by the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, to a participation of the spiritual and eternal blessings, that are enjoy'd in union with him, is (to allude to slaves that obtain their liberty) as much a freed man (*ἀπελευθερωτός*) of the Lord Redeemer's own making, and that in the most excellent and honourable sense of freedom and deliverance from the bondage he was under to sin, Satan, and all the severe exactions of the covenant of works, (*John viii. 36 Rom. vi. 18. and vii. 3, 4. and Gal. v. 13.*) as if he were not under any bond of civil servitude to men: And, on the contrary \*, he who was called out of darkness into marvellous light, (*1 Pet. ii. 9.*) while he was in a state of civil freedom as a master, or as a denison of Rome, is by his conversion become as much a servant, under the strongest bonds to Christ, his great Lord and Master, who redeemed and called him, that he might be so, as if he had been in the lowest state of subjection to men.

23 Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men.

23 So that, with respect to *religious* liberties and privileges, both are upon a level; and one as well as the other of you are redeemed from the worst of bondage and slavery, for the most honourable enjoyments and employments to the glory of God, (*chap. vi. 20.*) *not with silver or gold*, the price which men used to pay for a property in slaves, or for their ransom; *but with the precious blood of Christ* (*1 Pet. i. 18, 19.*) In correspondence therefore to this high and peculiar right which the Lord, who bought you, has to all your services, take heed of parting with that spiritual liberty, wherewith Christ has made you free; or of serving the lusts and sinful commandments of men; or of being so subject to them, in discharging the duties of your civil relations, as to interfere with your superior obligations to him.

24 Brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God.

24 Upon the whole then, my dear brethren, whatever be the external circumstances, and civil stations, in which any were converted, whether it were in either of those but now mentioned, (*ver. 16—22.*) or in any other; Let every one endeavour to be easy and contented with it, as what providence has ordered for him; and to fulfil the duties belonging to it, by walking with God therein, as under his eye, in obedience and devotedness to him, by assistance from him, and in communion with him, who is graciously present with his people in

#### N O T E.

\* Christ and the Lord, in this verse, evidently mean the same person, who is spoken of absolutely, as *the Lord*, as *the Lord who calls us*, as *the Lord who makes us free*, and has a peculiar property in us, as his free men,

and as *the Lord*, who is both the author and the object of our obedience, as we are his servants; all which can surely agree to none but that God, *whose we are, and whom we serve.* (*Acts xxvii. 23.*)

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife

in all conditions of life, and gives a sanctified use of them for his own glory and their own good.

25 Now, as to your queries about single persons that never were married \*, I cannot say that our blessed Lord, while on earth, left any direction or command, to forbid changing their condition, as he did against a wife's departing from her husband; (*ver.* 10.) But (*sc.*) as he intended, and promised a further revelation of his mind and will, by his inspired apostles, relating to several doctrines and duties, which pertain to the gospel state, (*John* xvi. 12—15.) I give my determination (*γινώσκω*) and advice in this case, as one who has found favour with the Lord, to be put into the apostleship, and to be assisted, and made faithful in it; and so what I deliver, by virtue of my office, is to be received, not as my own private opinion, but as an authentic rule of faith and practice. (See the note on *ver.* 10.)

26 My sentiments then, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, are, that, considering the present days of violent persecution for the sake of Christ, and how much easier it may be, either to escape or bear their terrors, in the single, than in the married life; it is most convenient and desirable for every one that is unmarried, to continue so provided he can do it with the preservation of his chastity (*ver.* 8, 9.)

27 Is one man among you joined to a wife, whom he took, and by the law of marriage is bound to hold during life, for better and for worse? Let him be satisfied with, and so contented in that state, as not to want to be released, much less to go into any sinful measures of freeing himself from it, by a divorce, or otherwise, on account of the difficulties and incumbrances that may attend it, even in the worst of times. On the contrary, Is another of you in the single state, free from all engagements, by promise or contract, to a wife? Let him be so well pleased and satisfied with his present condition, as not rashly to change it, or be forward to marry, without some urgent necessity for it;

since

#### N O T E.

\* It seems from this verse, and *ver.* 36. that among the questions sent to the apostle about marriage, there were some relating particularly to young persons; and though *virgins* properly signify only undefiled maidens; yet the nature of his argument requires our understanding him, as including young people of both sexes; accordingly in the next verse he says, *It is good for a man*, (*τῷ ἀνδρὶ καλόν*) which includes the male, to continue single; upon which he adds, (*ver.* 27.) *Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed.*

*Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife;* and in *ver.* 18. he prosecutes his point, with relation both to men and women. And Mr *Lake*, and Dr *Whitby* have offered several reasons, with great probability, to shew, that the words, (*τὴν ταύτην παρθένην*) which are rendered *his virgin*, *ver.* 37. signify rather the *virgin state*, or a state of celibacy, whether it be of a man or woman, than the *person* of a virgin, in the strict acceptation of the word. See their notes on that verse.



wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned: and if a virgin marry, the hath not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh; but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none;

since it is by far the best for him to suffer alone, without the additional grief of having a wife and family involved in troubles with him.

28 But if any man, upon a due consideration of all circumstances, shall find it most adviseable for him to enter into a state of wedlock, he may warrantably do it without transgressing any law of God; and the same holds equally true, with respect to a young woman, who, on like consideration, is minded to take to herself an husband: There certainly is no sin in marriage itself, only let such remember, that they will thereby expose themselves to greater anxiety and troubles in their temporal concerns, which will be very grievous to the flesh especially in these days of sore tribulation for the gospel's sake. But I forbear urging this matter so far as I might, lest it should too much discourage any of you, that are married: Or should prove a snare to some others, who may be desirous of that state: And so having laid these cautions before you, without binding any to a celibate or single life, I leave them to continue in it, or not, as their own prudence and conscience shall direct.

29 But whatever, my beloved brethren, any of you may do as to this; what I am going to add, is of the utmost importance for every one of you to observe, and reflect upon, with the greatest seriousness; namely that as all time is in a manner nothing, compared with eternity, and the whole duration of any of your abode, whatever your circumstances be in this world, is absolutely, and in itself, exceeding short and uncertain, and will soon have an end, none knows how soon; it may be before another day, hour, or moment: Hence it plainly follows, that they who have husbands or wives, or other near and dear relations, should consider them, as transitory dying comforts; and therefore should moderate their affections to them, and especially take heed of setting their hearts so much upon them, as to hinder their pursuit after spiritual and eternal things; yea they should set as loose from them, as if they had no such relatives in this world, when they come into competition with Christ and heaven, or would obstruct their duty towards God.

30 And they that mourn the loss of near relations, friends, or other enjoyments, and the various afflictions that befall them, in the ordinary course of providence, or for the gospel's sake, should restrain the excess of grieving passions, manage them with decency, and possess their own souls in religious peace and patience, as

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that

that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

if nothing troubled them: since all present calamities will soon be over-past, and the day is hastening apace, when God will wipe away all tears from their eyes: they, that are pleasing themselves with any enjoyments of this world, should consider that they are all uncertain, unsatisfying, and perishing, and so take heed of being elevated with them, as if their chief happiness lay in them; and should learn to behave with a holy indifference towards them, as if they had no affection for them: And they, that are busy in the affairs of this life, gathering riches by traffick, and purchasing estates with their gains, should remember how precarious all these things are; and sit as loose in heart from them, as if they had no possession of earthly treasures, which in a little time will make themselves wings and flee away; and especially take care, that they be no hindrance to them in their journey heaven ward.

31 And they that use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

31 And they that are making use of the worldly accommodations, which God has given them, for the necessities, conveniences, comforts, and services of life, should see to it, that their hearts be not swallowed up in them; that they don't make an idol of them; nor misapply and abuse them, to the dishonour of God and the pampering of their own pride and luxury: For (*εἰκὼν*) the figure, form, and image of this world in it's whole scheme, as to its present state and relations, and our way of enjoying it, conversing, trading, and living in it, is flying off like a shadow, and will soon vanish away.

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord how he may please the Lord:

32 And (*ἵνα*) the reason why I have said so much, (*ver. 1, 7, 8, 26, 28.*) in preference of the single to the married life is, because I would fain have you as free as possible from the anxious cares and perplexing incumbrances of this sorry world, especially in these perilous days, in order to your attending the service of God, and pursuing the salvation of your own souls, with the less hindrances and distractions: For it is obvious, that the unmarried christian is, generally speaking, most at liberty for laying out his thoughts, time, and labour about things that relate to the cause and interest of Christ, and to his own communion with him, and enjoyment of him; and for consulting how he may be best employed in such things as are most pleasing and acceptable to his Lord and Saviour.

33 But he that is married careth for the things that are

33 But the married, as particularly the believing husband, who acts with a conscience toward God, is necessarily engaged by the duties of his relation, to take more care and pains about the concerns of this present life

are of the world  
how they may please  
his wife.

life, for the maintenance of his family, and ordering its affairs to advantage, than he would otherwise be obliged to; and he is bound to study, and do all that he lawfully can, to interest himself in the affections of his wife, to make her easy and comfortable, and to supply her with a sufficiency, according to his station, for the support of herself, and of all that are committed to her charge. (1 Tim. v. 8.)

23 There is  
distinction be-  
tween a wife and  
a virgin. The  
unmarried wo-  
man careth for  
things of the  
Lord, that she  
may be holy both  
in body and in  
spirit: but she  
that is married  
careth for the  
things of the  
world, how she  
may please her  
husband.

34 There is also a like difference between a married woman and a maiden, that have received the faith of Christ: She, who is single, has ordinarily none of the cares and incumbrances of this life to trouble her, or to break in upon her liberty, and leisure, for attending to those things which relate to the knowledge, service, and glory of the Lord Christ, to her own interest in him, and salvation by him; her disentangled circumstances give her the greater advantage for making religion her business, that she may exercise herself unto godliness, both in the course of her life and conversation, and in the holy thoughts and dispositions of her heart; and so may glorify God in her body and spirit, which are his: But she, who is married, is obliged, by the duty of her place, to concern herself the more about the things of this world, and employ more of her time, thoughts, and pains, in contriving and managing the affairs of her family in the best manner; (1 Tim. v. 14.) and she ought to study and endeavour, by all christian, kind and prudent, sober and modest methods, to ingratiate herself with her husband, and industriously subserve his secular, as well as spiritual interest and happiness.

35 And this I  
speak for your  
own profit; not  
that I may cast a  
snare upon you,  
but for that which  
is comely and that  
you may attend  
upon the Lord  
without distraction.

35 And my real design, in thus giving the preference to a single life, is only with a view to the benefit of your own souls, that ye may pass through this troublesome world, especially in persecuting times, the freer from entanglements and hindrances in your way, and may be the more fully and undisturbedly engaged in your regards to the things of a better: Not that I would ensnare any of your consciences, by putting you upon such an absolute refusal of marriage, as might endanger your sinning against God, through the power of unchaste inclinations; only I would direct you, if ye are able to receive it, (Matth. xix. 11, 12.) to do what may be most expedient, and becoming christian prudence, in the present difficult circumstances of things; and may set you most at liberty for waiting upon, adhering, and keeping close to, and serving the Lord Jesus, and God the Father through him, in all religious duties

duties, with undivided hearts, without disquietude, perplexity, and wanderings of thought, by reason of the cares and incumbrances of this world.

36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

36 But if any parent (and the same may be said of a guardian) apprehends that he does not duly consult the advantage and reputation of his virgin daughter; or does not treat her in a becoming manner, by restraining her from marriage, after she has discovered inclinations to it, and is arrived at the age, beyond which it is commonly thought a reproach to remain single\*; or if any bachelor, who is at his own disposal, thinks that he has put too great a force upon his own temper, and disgraces himself, by continuing in a state of celibacy, after he has passed the usual reputable time for marrying; and if, in either of these cases, the parent, or the single person who has the disposal of himself, be under a conviction of duty about a change of condition, which ever way either of them thereupon takes, according to what he deliberately concludes, upon the whole, may be best, he is guilty of no sin against God, who has left this matter to be determined by circumstances: Accordingly a father may lawfully consent to the marriage of his daughter, when he sees it needful; and a young man, who is his own master, may lawfully take to himself a wife.

37 Nevertheless, he that standeth stedfast in his heart

37 Nevertheless, whoever he be, that is fixed in the purpose of his heart, not to encourage his daughter's marrying, especially in these days of great tribulation, and

#### N O T E.

\* In paraphrasing this and the two next verses, I have included a regard to Mr Locke's and Dr Whitby's sense of the words, translated his virgin. (τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ, and ver. 27. τὴν αὐτοῦ παρθένον as signifying his virginity, or state of celibacy; and the Doctor tells us from Phavorinus, that he is called a virgin, who freely gives up himself to the Lord, renouncing matrimony, and preserving a life spent in continency. Accordingly, if she pass the flower of her age, may be rendered, if it, that is, the state of virginity or of celibacy, be over aged, (ταὶ νηρησάμεναι) referring to the opinion of the Jews, and other civilized nations in those days, as though it were a reproach for a man or woman to continue single beyond a certain term of years: to what an extravagant height the Jews carried this point, see *Universal Hist.* vol. i. pag. 677. Note L. And so the verb, (ἐκπαύσκειν, or as the *Alexandrian*, *Clarmont*, and other copies read it, γαμίζειν) which is rendered, he that gives her in marriage, (ver. 38.) will signify he that marries. These constructions best comport with what is said about his standing sted-

fast in his heart, and having power over his own will, and having no necessity, (ver. 37.) which seems most apparently to relate to the person that should marry, or not, rather than to any one, whether father or guardian, that may be supposed to have the disposal of a virgin; since the necessity of marrying depends on the inclination which she feels in herself, to determine her, rather than on the father's or guardian's judgment about it. But then it is, and must be owned, that the words are more naturally rendered his virgin, as in our translation, than in the way which those learned critics have chosen; and it is highly probable that some questions had been sent to the apostle, about what parents and guardians should do with the young women that were under their care: and therefore I have taken both senses into the paraphrase; it being extremely difficult to say which of them may be most agreeable to the apostle's meaning. For the first of these interpretations, the reader may consult Mr Locke and Dr Whitby; and for the second, *Pareus*, *Beza*, *Grotius*, and others.

heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep his virgin, doth well.

and finds by her temper and behaviour, that, on her part, there is no necessity for it, but that he is fully at liberty to act according to his own will about it, without any danger to her, and therefore persists in his resolution of keeping her single; that man is to be commended for his prudent care and management of her. So likewise the bachelor, who, being pretty far advanced in life, has stedfastly resolved in his own mind, that he will not marry, and is under no necessity from overbearing inclinations, or other circumstances, to alter his condition, but can master his affections, and therefore abides by his resolution to keep single; this man doth what is most advisable and commendable, considering how much difficulty and danger, in these persecuting times, he might otherwise expose himself to.

38 So then, he that giveth her in marriage doth well: but he that giveth her not in marriage doth better.

38 So then, the sum of what I say with respect to such persons is this, the father who, as occasions require, gives his daughter in marriage, with her own free choice and full consent and liking, acts a lawful, wise, and becoming part; but he who, when there is no necessity on her side, refrains from disposing of her in marriage, still better consults her comfort and advantage, both for this world and the next: And the bachelor, who finds it needful for him to enter into the state of wedlock, acts very prudently in so doing; but he that can be well satisfied to continue single, and accordingly doth so, still better provides against inconveniencies and troubles in these suffering days, and for his own ease, and liberty of serving God to great advantage.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will: only in the Lord.

39 Finally, as to a woman that has been married \*, it may easily be gathered from what has been already said, (*ver. 10,—14.*) that she, instead of wanting to be released from her husband, on account of the present difficult state of the church, should consider herself as bound, by the law of God and nature, to cleave to him, till death parts them; unless he voluntarily and resolutely leave her, (*ver. 15.*) or be guilty of adultery: (*Matth. v. 32.*) But if it please God that he die *first*, it is then, in itself, a lawful thing for her to marry some other man; only she being a christian should remember, that it ought to be to none, but a man, who also makes a credible profession of Christ, as a believer in union with him, that they may have the approbation, presence, and blessing of God in their conjugal relation; may help one another forward, as *beirs together of the grace*

#### N O T E.

\* This seems to be an answer to some question, that had been sent to the apostle about widows,

*grace of life, (1 Pet. iii. 7.) in their way to heaven; may carry on the worship of God with sweet harmony in their family; and may heartily unite in training up those that are under their care, whether children or servants, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. vi. 4.)*

40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the spirit of God.

40. But, according to my judgment, it is ordinarily most desirable in these evil days, and best on religious accounts, (*ver. 35.*) for the widow never to alter her condition by marrying again, without some pressing necessity for it: And I, who well know when I am, or am not, under divine inspiration, do declare, that \*, whatever your new teachers may suggest to the contrary, (*chap. ix. 1, 2, 3. and 1 Cor. x. 10. and xiii. 3.*) I account myself to have the mind of God, in this and all the forementioned cases, as being under the special direction of his spirit about them. (See the note on *ver. 10.*)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How satisfied should Christians be; and with what care and conscience should they behave, in every relation of life, in which God found them, when he called them by his grace, whether they were masters or servants, in a single or married state! though the believing servant should thankfully embrace civil freedom, if providence favour him with a fair opportunity for it; yet how little reason has he to be dejected, or to envy his master; or the believing master, to despise his servant; since they both are equally the free men and servants of Christ, and are bought with his precious blood, that neither of them may be the servants of men, in violation of their superior obligations to him? as to single people of both sexes, how happy may they think themselves in their liberty and leisure of the service of God, and in their freedom from the cares and incumbrances of this world, and from the additional trouble of having a family to suffer with them in perilous times! It is therefore most prudent for them, at such seasons, not to marry, if they can be as well contented, and maintain a becoming chastity without it. But as marriage is lawful and honourable, and has its peculiar advantages and comforts, and is an appointed remedy against fornication, no parents ought absolutely to restrain their children of due age from it; and none ought to lay themselves under the snare of a vow of perpetual celibacy. If any single persons, that are at their own disposal, or otherwise have the consent of their parents, or guardians, shall, upon mature deliberation, as in the fear of God, think it most expedient to change their state for once, or oftner, if need require, they may do it without sin: But what care should believers take, that it be only with such, as make a credible profession of faith, and only with one person at once! and how should they study and labour

### N O T E.

\* As the apostle was so well acquainted with God's way of revealing his mind and will to him, by the spirit, he must needs have known wherein he was, or was not inspired; otherwise there would be the greatest uncertainty, as to his own, and our dependence on what he wrote: but it can't be supposed that he would imitate any thing, that looked like the least doubt in himself, whether he were under the guidance of the spirit, in his decisions of cases put to him; since that would have been to have given his adversaries the greatest advantage against him,

whilst he was labouring, all along, to assert his apostolick authority, in opposition to them: and therefore when he says, *I THINK (know) that I have the Spirit of God*, he is to be understood, as speaking, not with hesitation, but with inire confidence; in which sense the word here used is sometimes to be taken, as in *Luke xvii. 9. Acts xv. 25, 28 and xxvi. 9.* And he herein seems to refer, not merely to the last mentioned case; but to all that he had been saying, by way of addition to what our Lord himself had settled in his personal ministry.

labour, by divine grace, to live together with conjugal affection, fidelity, and peace; to please one another, and promote each other's salvation; and to do every thing they can, with a good conscience, for preventing a separation between them! If indeed (as often was the case in the apostles days, when the husband or wife was converted after marriage) one of them is an unbeliever, and will be actually divorced from the other, merely for being a Christian, that other is not still bound by the marriage contract, which the parting person has broke, and obstinately refuses to abide by; but if the believer can prevail with the unbeliever to continue their cohabitation, this is most desirable: For how doth the believing party know, whether God may not make him, or her, instrumental to the conversion of the other consort? & however, in case only one of them be a believer, and it please God to bless them with children, what a comfort is it to think, that the unbelieving mate is so far sanctified in and by the believing one, as to preserve the covenant entail of privileges to their offspring, that they may be accounted, treated, and devoted to God, as an holy seed; though baptism be of no more avail now, than circumcision was of old, without a new creature! But, after all, what a high point of wisdom is it, for every one to choose such a condition of life, and order his affairs in such a manner, as he thinks may, by the blessing of God, be most likely to admit of the best helps, and the least hindrances, to solemn fasting and prayer, on proper occasions; to doing those things that are most pleasing to God; and to attending on the Lord without distractions! For whatever the station be, which the providence of God has distributed to us, we ought continually to bear in mind, that our lives themselves are very short and transitory, and all things here exceeding precarious, like a shadow that flies away. And how should this thought wear our hearts from the present world, that, whether we be in comfortable or afflicted circumstances, we may indulge to no excess, either in our joys or griefs, on their account; and may use all the accommodations of this life, without any abusing them! To conclude, how should a sense of divine authority bind all this upon our consciences; since it is recommended to us by a faithful, benevolent, and inspired apostle, who wished others might be as happy as himself, and gave his directions about it, under the unerring conduct of the spirit of God!

## C H A P. VIII.

*The apostle, in answer to another proposed case, about meats offered to idols, shews the danger of people's having a high conceit of their own knowledge, 1,—3. The vanity of idols, and the unity of the Godhead, in opposition to a multiplicity of Gods, 4,—7. And the mischief of offending weak brethren, by eating things offered to idols, even supposing that, in the civil view, it might be lawful, 8,—13.*

### TEXT.

NOW, as touching things offered

### PARAPHRASE.

NOW to proceed to your queries about feasting upon such things, as have been dedicated to false Gods\*, which

### N O T E.

\* It was customary among Pagan idolaters to offer oxen, sheep, and other animals, that were fit for food, in sacrifice to their gods. Part of these sacrifices were consumed on the altar, and the remainder was divided, in various shares, between the priest and the offerers, who feasted on them, and invited their friends to the entertainment, sometimes in the *Idol temple*, and at others in their own houses; and what was not

thus disposed of was often sold in the market. Chap. x. 25. (Vide *Spencer de Rit. Hebr.* p. 300, 301, and *Jarvis's Hist. Crit. des Dogmes & des Cultes, &c. Part. iii. Chap. x. and Part iv. Chap. xi.*) Now, as appears from ver. 4, 10. some of the *Corinthians* pleaded, that, since an idol is nothing, it could not defile the meats which were offered to it; and that therefore it was not unlawful, but rather shewed a contempt of the

ferred unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge; knowledge posseth up, but charity edifieth.

which some suppose they may lawfully do, without any manner of scruple, because they know an idol is nothing: (*ver. 4.*) It is allowed that the generality of us, Christians, have some notion of the vanity of idols; nor is it denied, but that you, who boast so much of your knowledge, are enlightened in this point, which all of us, the apostles of Christ, are so clearly and fully assured of, as any of you can be †: but if some hereupon imagine, that there is no harm, in any circumstances, or on any account whatsoever, in eating what has been offered up to those fictitious deities; let such remember, for their caution, that mere notions in the head, and a fond conceit of their own superior understanding, puff up the pride of their hearts, and indispose them to receive further instruction, or to condescend to others of lower attainments: but true love to God, and to our brethren for his sake, makes our knowledge practical, and engages us to use, and improve it, for the promoting of holiness, peace, and comfort in others, as well as in our own souls.

1 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

2 And if one be opinionated of his own knowledge, as though he were wiser than others, and so despises them, and is above either attending to their sentiments, or consulting their edification, he does not know any thing, as yet, in such an humble and beneficial manner, and to such spiritual purposes and advantages, as he ought to know it, and as is pleasing in the sight of God; he really is a vain boaster, and deceives himself. (*Gal. vi. 3.*)

3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

3 But if any one heartily loves God, and from that principle is influenced to make such use of his knowledge, as may be most to the divine glory, and the welfare of his Christian brethren; that man is approved and owned of God, as a sincere believer, whom he loves, and who employs his talents for his Masters service.

4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know

4 As to your question then about the lawfulness of eating things, which have been offered as sacrifices, and so consecrated to idols; we, who are thoroughly instructed in the nature and design of christian liberty, are

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imaginary God, to eat of them in the Heathen temples, as well as in the private families of their friends, or when they had been sold in the market: but as they carried that matter too far, the apostle, in this chapter, sets himself to oppose such an unguarded use of their liberty therein, as, even though supposed to be lawful in itself, would be injurious and misleading to others, who could not distinguish, as they themselves might, between a civil act, and a veneration of the idol, as may be gathered from *ver. 7.—12.*

And he more fully states the point itself, and shews how far it was, or was not lawful, in *Chap. x. 19. &c.*

† *We all know*, taken in either of the ways put in the paraphrase, may very well comport with the apostle's design, as well as with the restrictive sense, in which the scripture often uses the term *all*; and stands clear of any inconsistency with his saying, *ver. 7. There is not in every man that knowledge.*



know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.

3 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; (as there be gods, many, and lords many;)

4 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

are well satisfied, that the gods of the heathen nations, and the images which represent them, are all *lying vanities*, merely nominal gods, which have no divinity, no virtue, or power in them, and can do nothing to change the nature of meats, or make them either better, or worse in themselves; and that there is only one living and true God, in opposition to all that *by nature are no Gods.* (Gal. iv. 8.)

5. For though, among the *Pagan* idolaters, there be great multitudes that are falsely esteemed and called Gods and many objects of their worship, some of which are their celestial, and others their terrestrial deities, as in their theology they have many superior gods, and many dæmons, who in their account are gods of a lower rank, and a sort of mediators, by whom they make their addresses to their imagined divine powers of the higher order:

6. Yet in reality, and in our esteem who believe, there is, in opposition to all heathen deities \*, but one true God or one Divine Being, that is the object of religious worship, and, in one manner of subsistence and operation, is by gospel revelation represented under the personal character of *the Father*; from whom, (ἐκ) as the first Mover, all things in creation, providence, and grace, originally proceed, (Rom. xi. 36.) and in *whom we live, and move, and have our beings*: (Acts xvii. 28.) And to us there is but one Lord, even Jesus Christ, who is not, like the nominal dæmons of the heathen, another god, different from the Father, or inferior in essence to him, but is, in another manner of subsistence and operation, by nature God, and a divine person, *by whom as well as for whom all things were created, and in whom* (ἐν αὐτῷ) *all things consist*:

Col. i. 16. 17.

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\* *One God* is exclusive, not of the *one Lord*, as though he were an inferior Deity. But only of the *idols*, to which *the one God* is opposed: to think otherwise would be to destroy the apostle's own argument for the Unity of God, and make him talk as inconsistently, as if he would prove, that *there is none other God but one*, because, instead of many, there are only two, one supreme and the other subordinate; and then would give such a reason of this, as overturns the distinction itself, by adding that *all those things, which are of the Father*, we in their utmost latitude *by the Son*, as one in operation with him, just as at other times, speaking of the Father, all things are said to be *by him*. (ἐκ αὐτοῦ and δι' αὐτοῦ) Rom. xi. 34, 36. and Heb. ii. 10. In the first of these places, the Father is styled *the Lord*, (Κύριος) without the

article, as Christ is here; but by the same way of arguing, that excludes the Lord Jesus Christ from being *God*, the Father would be excluded from being *Lord*: Or if, as Mr Joseph Mede supposes, (Vol. i. pag. 318.) the apostle here alludes to the custom of the heathens, who worshipped one or more Sovereign Deities, by inferior Dæmons, which are called *Ætium*, or *Lords*, then what is said of the *one Lord Jesus Christ*, may be considered, as relating, not so directly to what he is in his original nature, as to his office of mediation with God the Father; while he himself is styled *Lord*, and the very same works are ascribed to him, as to the Father, to shew what a *divine Mediator* he is, as has been represented more at large in my sermons on *Jesus Christ God Man*, p. 63. 64.

*Col. i. 16. 17.*) by whom likewise, a considered under the notion of mediator, all spiritual blessings are communicated from God the Father, and all our religious addresses are made to him, and are accepted of him, together with our persons, in and through this our great high priest and advocate. (*Eph. i. 3, 6. and ii. 18. and Heb. xii. 15.*)

6 Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge: for some, with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

7. Nevertheless, every one (see the second note on *ver. 1.*) has not a clear and distinct knowledge of the nullity of heathen gods: (*ver. 4.*) For some of the new converts from gross *Gentilism*, retaining too much of a secret veneration for their former idols, do still to this very day, after all their professions of Christianity, eat of those meats which are offered to them, not merely as common food, but as therein paying some sort of honour to them, as though there really were something of divinity in them; and their consciences, not being yet fully instructed into the pure doctrine of the gospel, but continuing under remaining darkness and error in those points, are sadly defiled with the guilt of idolatry. (*Chap. v. 11.*)

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse.

8. But if others could safely eat of those things with, a contempt of the idol, (see the first note on *ver. 1.*) they should notwithstanding consider, that food of any kind whatsoever, is no recommendation of us to the divine favour: for as the kingdom of God consists not in meats and drinks; (*Rom. xiv. 17.*) so, if we partake of heathen entertainments, though it be without any respect to the idol, to which they have been devoted, it is of no religious advantage to us; nor if, in point of prudence, we abstain from eating of such meats, are we ever a whit the worse Christians on that account: one doth us no good; and the other doth us no harm, as to our spiritual concerns, so far as it relates only to ourselves.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

9 But what you should be principally cautious and careful about is, that, be your power or right (*1 Cor. x.*) of eating such things ever so lawful in itself, yet never insist upon, or make use of it, to the ensnaring of those that are weak in the faith, and unsettled in the knowledge of the truth; and to the occasioning of them to fall into sin, by their doing that with a doubting, or with a superstitious mind, which ye, with your superior judgment, can do safely, and satisfactorily to yourselves.

10 For if any man see thee which hath knowledge

10 For if any such person, who is less acquainted with the doctrine of Christian liberty, and of the vanity of heathen deities, shall see you, who have further  
light

ledge sit at meat in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols:

11 And thereby knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sit so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

light in things of that nature, sitting in an idol's temple to feast upon meats that are offered in sacrifice to those imaginary Gods \*; Will not the conscience of him, that is not satisfied about the lawfulness of it, and cannot so well distinguish between civil and religious acts, be encouraged, by your example, to eat of such sacrifices, with the veneration of the idol itself, which would be real idolatry in him?

11 And so, by means of what you are supposed to do innocently, with a better understanding, and think, you can justly, on the foot of Christian liberty, your ignorant, doubting, and mistaken brother, will be led into sin and error, to the destroying of the peace, confidence, and quiet of his conscience, and the contracting of such guilt, as in its own nature tends to his final perdition; for whose redemption and salvation Christ himself laid down his precious life, as you, in the judgment of charity, ought to believe he did for all, that make a credible profession of his name. (See the note on *Rom.* xiv. 15.)

12 But while, in this manner, any of you act so injuriously against your Christian brethren, and by misleading them into sinful and idolatrous practices (*1 Cor.* x. 20) smite and wound, disturb and defile their tender and unsettled consciences, ye sin, not against them only, but also against Christ himself, whose visible members they are; and ye do what in you lies to defeat the design of his love, in what he has suffered for their consolation and salvation.

13 As to myself therefore, I would be so far from indulging the most innocent liberty to the hurt of others, that if eating of meat, which has been offered to idols, would disturb the conscience of my Christian brother, or, occasion his falling into sin; I would entirely abstain from all such flesh, how lawfully soever I might otherwise eat of it, and how gratefully soever it might be to my palate; and would deny myself so far, as never to taste it all the days of my life, rather than give an occasion of stumbling and falling to the weakest brother upon earth.

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How much better is the knowledge, that is under the government of love to God and our Christian brethren for his sake, than all the finest speculations in the world! notions that lie in the head, puff up the heart; and he that is so conceited

## N O T E.

\* The apostle here argues only on a supposition, that banqueting on such meats in an idol's temple were as lawful, as any of the *Corinthians* might apprehend it to be:

But in *Clap.* x. 20, &c. he shews that there were some circumstances, in that manner of doing it, which made it quite otherwise.

of his knowledge, as to think he needs no more, and despises others of weaker understanding, knows nothing as he ought: But love keeps the soul humble in itself, is condescending and benevolent to others, and is highly pleasing to God, who loves them that love him.—What vain idols are all the superior and inferior deities of the heathen, which have no divinity in them! But O what a mercy is it to be well instructed in the unity of that God, of whom and by whom are all things, as inclusive of the Father and Son, who, though personally distinct, are *one God, and one Lord*, in opposition to all that are not by nature God! And how are those Christians to be pitied, whose conceptions of these important things are confused and unsettled, and who act with doubting consciences, for want of clearer sentiments about them! But how careful should those of a more enlightened judgement be, to avoid every thing, that might mislead their weaker brethren, or encourage them to venture on any way of sin, that would wound their consciences, and destroy their peace and edification, and tend to their utter ruin, for whom Christ died, and who are to be deemed such by their profession of him! Who, that dreads the thoughts of sinning both against him and them, would not willingly wave his own liberty in things, which may be done or forborn, without making himself either the better or worse in God's account, and in his spiritual concerns, rather than indulge the pleasure of eating any particular sort of offensive food, like meat consecrated to idols, or than do any thing while he lives, which he thinks might prove a snare, or a stumbling block to his Christian brother!

## C H A P. IX.

*The apostle vindicates his authority against those, who, among other pretences, made his not receiving maintenance an objection against it, 1,—3. Asserts his right to maintenance from the reason of things, from the law of Moses, and the appointment of Christ, 4,—14. Tells them, that he thought it his glory to have waved this branch of his Christian liberty among them, 15,—18. And had done it for the benefit of others, in several instances besides this, 19,—23. And shews that he did all this, with the utmost care and diligence, in view of an incorruptible crown, and therein set them an example, 24,—27.*

TEXT.

AM I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not

not

PARAPHRASE.

NOW to shew how ready I am to practise the duty of self-denial, in the exercise of my Christian liberty, for the good of others, it is well known that I have done this in a remarkable manner, for your and the gospel's sake, in working with my own hands, and not taking the maintenance, which I might have insisted on from you, when I preached a year and half at *Corinth*; (*Acts xviii. 3, 11.*) and yet some among you have been so perverse, as to object against this apostolick authority on that account\*. But am I really not

## N O T E S.

\* As the apostle, in answer to those that questioned his authority, *ver. 3.* insists so largely in the next succeeding verses, on his right of receiving maintenance, and then goes on to shew why he had waved that privilege; it is hard to conceive with what

propriety that could be called a defence of his apostolick character against their cavils, unless they had sounded them, in part at least, upon his not having asserted the rights, privileges, and powers of an apostle, as others had done, in demanding and receiving

not seen Jesus  
Christ our Lord?  
are not you my  
work in the Lord?

a true Apostle of Christ, because I have acted so disinterested and generous a part toward you? This should rather have recommended, than lessened my Character among you. Am I not as free from obligations to give my labours *gratis* to any people, and as much at liberty, if I pleased, to claim a subsistence, at their cost, in preaching the gospel to them, as any other apostle? 'Tis surely unreasonable and ungrateful to suppose the contrary, only because I have not insisted upon this right. And as to the signs of mine Apostleship, have I not seen Jesus our only Lord and Saviour, and that in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, not only after his resurrection, but even after his ascension to heaven †? He certainly appeared in person from thence, to give me my commission, and an immediate revelation of the gospel, which I preach. (*Chap. xv. 8. and Acts xxii. 17, 18. and Gal. i. 12.*) And are not ye, the church at *Corinth*, who are converted by my ministry, (*chap. iii. 5, 6. and Acts xviii. 1—11.*) evident instances of it's efficacy, through the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, who, by that means has wrought a happy change upon you, and produced those excellent gifts as well as graces that ye are enriched with.

3 If I be not  
an apostle unto o-  
thers, yet doubt-  
less I am to you:  
for

2 If there be any others, and particularly any adversaries, that are risen up among you, on whom my labours have not been successful, and who therefore will not own me to be an apostle of Christ; yet undoubtedly I am one, in an eminent manner, to you; and, whatever they maliciously object against me, ye of all others, ought cheerfully to own my divine mission: For your conversion is a confirming testimony, like a sealed war-  
rant

#### N O T E S.

receiving such maintenance from the churches, as was due to that office; and without supposing this, what he offers in the first and second verses, to support his commission, seems to be brought in very abruptly, without any manner of connection with either what goes before, or follows after it. But, admitting that their letter had suggested, as though something of this kind had been objected against him, the propriety of the whole stands in a fair light, and in good connection with what he had been saying, at the close of the preceding chapter, about his denying himself in things indifferent, and with what he further adds about maintenance in the next verses, as also about waving his christian liberty in divers other instances, from *ver. 19 to ver. 23.* *See* indeed, *Parent*, and some others think the Apostle's *Answer*, *ver. 3.* refers to the preceding and not the following verses: but, be that as it will; yet without the suppo-

sition of an objection against his authority, on account of his not demanding and receiving maintenance, we are still greatly at a loss, to see how the vindication of his apostleship in these verses comes in; and how to preserve a tolerable connection between them and the foregoing and the following discourse.

† It was necessary, among other things, that the apostles should have seen Christ risen from the dead, because a great and fundamental part of their office lay in testifying witness to his resurrection: see the note on *Acts xiii. 31.* And therefore *Paul* here mentions this to show, that he was not destitute of that essential qualification of an apostle; and the extraordinary manner in which he was favoured with it, after Christ's ascension, beyond the rest of the apostles, may be considered as adding strength to this branch of his argument, and therefore is brought into the par phrase.

for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,

4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?

5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?

6 Or I only and Barnabas, have

rant, to the validity of my apostolic office, which I received from the Lord Jesus himself, and have executed by his authority and influence; and which he honoured by the holy impressions that he visibly made upon you, when I was the instrument of begetting you to him, through the gospel, and so was your spiritual father. (*chap. iv. 15.*)

3 My apology (*απολογία*) and defence then in general, by way of reply to those that call in question mine authority, and sit as it were in judgment to censure me, (*εναγκαλισται*) is summarily comprehended in what I have been saying: (*ver. 1, 2.*) And so far forth, as they make a handle of my not asserting the rights and powers of an apostle, in taking the maintenance due to persons in that office, mine answer in particular to that charge, is as follows. (*See the note on ver. 1.*)

4 Have not I and my brother Barnabas, (*ver. 6.*) as well as any other apostle authority (*ἐξουσιαν*) to demand a supply of convenient food and drink from the people, among whom we spend our time and strength in ministering the gospel? We certainly have; notwithstanding our tenderness in not always insisting upon it, that we might not be chargeable to them (*2 Thes. iii. 8, 9.*)

5 Nay, in case we had seen fit to have married, hath not either of us a claim to the privilege of carrying about, from place to place, a sister in Christ, whom we had taken into the relation of a wife \*, and of requiring that those, whom we minister to, should be at the additional charge of maintaining our families, together with ourselves, as others of the apostles have done? To instance in some of the circumcision, have we not power for this, as well as James, and other near kinsmen of our Lord, according to the flesh, (*Matth. xiii. 55.* and see the note on *Matth. xii. 46.*) and particularly as well as the apostle Peter, in whom some of you peculiarly glory. (*chap. i. 12.*)

6 Or is it to be supposed that only I and Barnabas, my dear companion and fellow traveller, who were called

#### N O T E.

\* A sister, a wife (*αδελφην γυναικα*) cannot fitly signify a sister woman, because every sister must needs be a woman; and the word (*γυναίκα*) signifies a wife all along in *Chap. vii.* where it is very often used, and mostly rendered a wife, though sometimes a woman, with a reference to her being a wife. And it surely better comports with the apostle's reputation and argument, to think, that he spoke of carrying about a wife, than any other woman, whether a domestick servant, or a woman of substance to attend him, like those that voluntarily followed our

Lord, to minister to him, who therefore could not be properly said to carry them about with him. The first of these his narrow circumstances did not well admit of buying, or hiring; and the second would have been a help, rather than a charge to the churches; and so to have instanced in such as the last of these, would have been directly contrary to the design of his argument; and as Peter was married, (*Matth. viii. 14.*) there is no room to doubt, but that the woman he carried about was his wife.

have not we power to forbear working?

1 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who teacheth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

led, separated, and sent forth to our work, by the Holy Ghost, and by the intervention of the church and elders at *Antioch*, (*Acts* xiii. 2, 3, 4.) Is it, I say, to be thought that we are the only apostles that are excluded from the right of being maintained by the churches, and of being excused working with our own hands to subsist ourselves, as ye well know I did at *Corinth*? (*Acts* xviii. 3.) it is utterly unreasonable to imagine any thing like this, were ye only to consider the equity of things:

7 For as we are *Soldiers*, listed under Christ's banner, to pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and captivate the hearts of sinners to him (*2 Cor.* x. 4. and *2 Tim.* ii. 3, 4.) who ever uses to undergo the hardships, dangers, and expence of a war, at his own cost and charges, without partaking of the spoils? Again, as the church is styled God's vineyard, (*Isa.* v. 1, &c. and *Luke* xx. 9, &c.) and we are *labourers* under him, (who gives the increase) to plant, dress, and water it, (*chap.* iii. 6—9) Who is ever employed in forming and cultivating such a plantation, and has not the privilege of eating of it's produce? Or, as we are *shepherds* under Christ, whom he has appointed to feed his lambs and his sheep, (*John* xxi. 15, 16. and *1 Pet.* v. 2, 4.) who has such a charge of the flock, and spends his time, care, and labour in fulfilling it, and is not sustained and refreshed with it's milk? since therefore every one reasonably expects, and is allowed, these rewards of his labour, surely every minister of the gospel, who sustains all these characters, has a right to be maintained by his employment in the service of Christ, and of the church's.

8 Do I mention these well known instances of what is commonly practised, and always counted fit and equitable among men, and argue this point merely on the foot of human judgment, on which I might venture to rest the cause? Or doth not divine revelation also, in the *Mosaic* law itself, which *Jewish* zealots, my grand opposers, are so fond of, teach the very same things! It certainly doth.

9 For, to look back to the Old Testament-dispensation, it is recorded in the law, which *Moses* delivered to the *Israelites*; (*Deut.* xxv. 4.) you shall not prevent the ox, by muzzling him, or by any other methods, from eating of the corn, which he treads out of the ear, while he is labouring in that work. Do ye suppose that this divine injunction related merely to such inconsiderable brute creatures as oxen, as though God only took care that proper provisions should be made for them?

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

10 Or rather, is it not natural to conclude, that tho' his mercies are over all his works, he has a farther meaning in it \*, to show the still greater obligation, which lies upon all persons to exercise humanity, and do justice toward their own species, that are employed in working for them; and especially towards us, who labour in the work of the Lord, for the benefit of their souls? Doubtless it stands on record for instruction of this sort, and for enjoining an equitable regard to any of us, who labour in useful services for the good of mankind: that as the plowman takes pains for others, in breaking up the ground, and sowing it, (*ver.* 11.) with a reasonable expectation of a proper recompence; and the thresher beats out the corn, in expectation of receiving a suitable reward; and as, in this manner, *the husbandman, that labours, ought to be partaker of the fruits:* (2 Tim. ii 6.) so we, who are employed about God's spiritual husbandry, (*chap.* iii. 9.) in breaking up the fallow ground of sinners hearts, and in sowing the good seed of his word; and we, who in our preaching separate the wheat from the chaff, the saint from the sinner, may well expect to receive the necessities of life, as a just recompence from the churches, for whose advantage we thus labour in the word and doctrine.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

11 If we have sown the seed of God's word among you, as the means of producing spiritual and eternal blessings, for the refreshment, improvement, and salvation of your immortal souls; is it any great return, or what any reasonable and grateful person would grudge; if, for our labour in scattering such inestimable benefits among you, we are made to partake of such shares of your temporal substance, as are needful for the sustenance of our mortal bodies, and fitting them for further services of this excellent nature? There is surely no proportion between the value of what ye give and receive; the last so far exceeds the first.

12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are

12 If accordingly other servants of Christ, and even the false teachers themselves among you, claim and exert an authority over you for the maintenance, which I have been speaking of; (*ver.* 4—6.) and ye allow their demand to be just; are not we, who first planted and watered

#### N O T E.

\* As in *Deut.* xxv. 4. the passage here referred to, nothing goes before or after it, that has any relation to beasts, but it stands amidst directions to the duties of justice and mercy toward reasonable creatures: it may well be concluded, that the prohibition of

muzzling the ox is there brought in, the more strongly to enforce those duties toward men; and therefore is very fitly applied by the apostle, in an argument for the maintenance of ministers of the gospel.



are not, we rather? nevertheless, we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

watered the *Corinthian church*, (*chap. iii. 6.*) much more entitled to it? Nevertheless, to shew, that we seek not yours, but you, we have not insisted upon, nor indeed received this acknowledgment from you, which we had so unquestionable a right to; but have rather chosen to undergo all the hardships of want, or of providing for ourselves by the labour of our own hands; lest, by putting you to any charge, we should have prejudiced your worldly minds against us, as though we had mercenary designs upon you; and so should have obstructed your attending upon, and readily receiving that glorious gospel, which sets forth the person, offices, and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which he is the author of, and has committed to our trust.

13 Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

13 But had we claimed and used our liberty in this case, there could have been no just objection against it, especially not by *Jewish converts* \*: For, to remind you of the provision, which God still more expressly made for his ministering servants in the *Mosaic law*, (*Numb. xviii.*) do ye not understand and consider, that by his appointment the *Levites*, who officiated in holy things, as in killing and preparing the sacrifices, and the like, were maintained by the offerings at the tabernacle, and afterwards at the temple; and that the *priests*, who devoted themselves to the service of the altar, had their parts and shares of it's sacrifices, for the subsistence of themselves and their families? Surely ye, who so much boast of your knowledge, can't be strangers to these things.

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

14 In like manner, to bring all this down to the New Testament state, in which the reason of things is the same, our Lord Jesus, by his immediate authority, has appointed and ordered, that his servants, whom he sends forth to preach the everlasting gospel, should be maintained by those that have the benefit of their labours; as particularly when he said with a reference to this very case, *Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, &c. For the workman is worthy of his meat, and the labourer of his hire.* (*Matth. x. 9, 10. and Luke x. 7.*)

15 But I have used none of these things, neither have

15 But notwithstanding all this clear proof, from the nature of things, from the law of *Moses*, and from Christ's own institution, that gospel ministers ought to be provided for, at the people's cost; and though I have as much right to it, as any of his servants: Yet I have

not

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle's arguing out of the law more effectually to silence their opposition to him.  
 my intimate, that he therein had his eye him.  
 most particularly on the *Jewish converts*, the

have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

not made use of my privilege in this respect; nor have I wrote these things about it with any desire or intention; that, whenever I may come to you again, it should be at your expence: No, I only mention it to stop the mouths of those, that seek all opportunities of aspersing me; and to set you an example of self-denial, and of waving the use of your Christian liberty, on proper occasions: For I had rather perish for want, or wear out my life with hard labour to earn my bread, than that any one should deprive me of the pleasure and honour, as I count it, of promoting the interest of Christ, and the good of your souls, in the most acceptable manner, by preaching the gospel freely, without making it any way burdensome, and so prejudicing you against it.

16 For, though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.

16 For though, in the discharge of my office, I have published, and still continue to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ; this is my indispensable duty; and so I have no more room to glory in barely doing this, than others have, which is indeed none at all: for I am under an absolute necessity, by the commission and command of my great Lord and Master, to preach the gospel wherever I come; (*Acts* xxii. 15, 21. and *Rom.* i. 14.) yea, the worst of all woes, even to the bitterest reproaches of a guilty conscience here, and everlasting horrors hereafter must be my portion, were I to be disobedient to the heavenly vision, in not preaching the gospel; (*Acts* xxvi. 19.) which, I trust, will never be my case.

17 For, if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

17 For if I voluntarily and cheerfully attend to this important service at free cost, and *that* under all the difficulties of want and poverty, or of providing for myself, merely for the glory of God, and the salvation of others, I have at present a noble satisfaction in so doing, which I would not part with for all this world; and I humbly look for, and depend upon a gracious reward of my faithfulness and zeal in the day of Christ: But if it be with unwillingness and reluctance, that I receive and manage the trust, which he has committed to me, for dispensing his gospel, and therein act as an hireling, who values the fleece more than the flock, and grudges his pains, unless it be with a prospect of some temporal advantage to himself;

18 What is my reward then? verily

18 What is the reward then, that I could expect, at present, in the reflections of my own mind, or could look for at the great day of account, in such a mercenary and unfaithful way of executing my commission?

Why

ly that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law

Why truly none, but what is very terrible \*, though nothing can be more happy, in case of faithfulness: This, I assure you, I often seriously think of that when I preach the glorious gospel of the grace of God, I may be the more excited to plant and settle it, (*θραυ*) merely for Christ's sake, in love and obedience to him, whose gospel it is; and may do this freely, without expence to my hearers, as often as circumstances make it needful, and conducive to the great ends of my ministry; that I may not rigorously, and unseasonably use my right of requiring a supply from the people, in return for my labour in preaching to them.

19 For though in this instance of Christian liberty, as well as in several others, I am under no obligation to any man to abridge myself in the use of it; yet I have been willing, and have thought it matter of prudence and duty, so far to consult the various tempers, weaknesses, and unhappy biasses of all sorts of men, as, in things of that nature, to submit myself like a servant, and accommodate my measures, in the most pleasing manner to them; to the end that, by such condescensions, innocent compliances, and self-denials, I might sweeten their spirits; might recommend Christ, and his doctrines and ways, the better to them; and might win the more souls over to him, which I count the richest gain of all my ministrations.

20 As for instance, when I have had to do with the *unbelieving Jews*, I have reasoned with them out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, as a proper way of arguing with a Jew; (*Acts* xvii. 2, 3.) and, as far as I could with a safe conscience, and consistently with the truth of the gospel, have observed their *Jewish* rites and ceremonies, as in the circumcising of *Timothy*, because his Father was a *Greek*, (*Acts* xvi. 3.) that I might soften their offence at the gospel's being preached by an uncircumcised *Gentile*, and might bring them over to Christ †: In dealing with *believing Jews*, who, for want of further light, think themselves to be still under an obligation of keeping up a religious regard to certain branches of the ceremonial law, (*Acts* xxi. 20.) I, as knowing that all it's ordinances are not, as yet, absolutely unlawful

#### N O T E S.

\* *What is my reward?* is paraphrased with relation both to a faithful and unfaithful discharge of his office, and to a reward at present, and to be expected hereafter; all which taken together, seems to me to clear up the force and connection of the argument, better than any thing I have met with in commentators, many of which have rather

puzzled than satisfied me in their accounts of it.

† I have chosen to understand by the *Jews*, the *unconverted* among them; and by *them that are under the law*, the *converted Jews*, that we may keep the ideas distinct, which otherwise may be too coincident.

law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law.

lawful, and that there must be time allowed to bring them intirely off from their old opinions about it, have also so far yielded to their prejudices, as, on important occasions, to comply with some of it's rites; (*Acts* xviii. 18. and xxi. 21—26. See the notes there) to the end that I may the better ingratiate myself with them, and gradually reconcile them to the whole of the gospel scheme; while, at the same time, I continue to warn them against laying any stress upon ritual observances, or imagining that they can be thereby justified; and constantly teach them to make Christ the only ground of their hope toward God.

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are under the law.

21 On the other hand, when I am cast among those that are acquainted with the Old Testament, and never were under the *Jewish* dispensation, I preach Christ to them, without appealing to the law and the prophets, for the confirmation of what I say concerning him; but resting the cause intirely upon the evidence of the doctrine itself, the plain facts, and undoubted miracles wrought to prove it, and the spirit of God to set all home upon their hearts; and in my behaviour toward them, and among them, I take care not to offend them, by my own observing, or putting them upon complying with circumcision, and other ceremonial rites, relating to meats and days, and the like: Nay, I strenuously remonstrate against those that would impose such rites upon them; (*Gal.* ii. 3—14.) and assert my own, and their liberty, as to those things; looking upon myself, at the same time, not as a lawless person, or as one that is not bound to keep the *moral* law, with a conscience toward God, as in his sight, and in obedience to him; but as being, as much as ever, under that law, as a rule of life in the hand of Christ, who has made it the inviolable law of his kingdom, that all my thoughts, words, and actions may be regulated according to it, in a due subjection to him. And this I carefully attend to, while I abstain from all ceremonial observances among the *Gentiles*, that I may lay no obstacles in the way of their conversion, who never were under the *Mosaic* law; but may gain their hearty consent to Christ and his gospel, as believers in him; and an intire subjection to him, without the incumbrances of that antient yoke of bondage.

22 To the weak became I as weak

22 Again, when I have been conversant, either with believing *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that are weak in knowledge and grace; and apt to be stumbled and grieved, or drawn into sin against their own consciences, while they see others making such a use of Christian liberty, in things

weak, that I might gain the weak : I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

things of an indifferent nature, as they themselves are scrupulous about; I have, in those cases, condescended to their infirmities, and forbore the use of such liberty, as is in itself lawful and innocent, that I might not lay stumbling-blocks before them; but might win them over to, and settle them in, the more important points of faith, and moral obedience: In a word, I have tried all allowable expedients, and yielded, as far as possible, in acts of self-denial, in my dealing with all sorts of persons, wheresoever I came; not from any unsettledness in my own principles, temper, and views; but to the end that, by all prudent, laudable, and sinless methods, which I think best suited to their circumstances, and most likely to be attended with a divine blessing, I might be instrumental, in the hand of Christ, to deliver some, at least, of all sorts from the error of their ways; from the power of sin and Satan, and their own prejudices; and from the curse of the law, and the wrath to come; and to lead them into all the privileges and blessings of a spiritual salvation, even unto eternal life.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

23 And 'all this I do, out of a sincere and zealous concern to prevent unreasonable exceptions against the gospel, and to recommend and propagate it among people of every character; to the end that I may not only share in its special and saving benefits myself; but may have a joint communion and partnership in them, with many others, and particularly with you.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize?

So

24 In this manner of conducting myself, in which ye ought to imitate me \*, I act with care and caution, diligence and constancy, like *the racers*, and *combatants* in the *Grecian* games, which are wont to be celebrated in the neighbourhood of *Corinth* †: Ye very well know that in *racing*, all, who are called to that exercise, run, and continue running, with all their might, to get the garland, which is set up at the end of their course; every one hoping to obtain it, by reaching the goal first, though but one can have it: In like manner, it is your duty and interest, as well as mine, to *run with patience the race which is set before us*, (Heb. xii. 1.) and, by divine assistance, to be *pressing toward the mark*

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle evidently intends that what he had been saying, and was further going to add, about his own conduct, should be regarded by private christians for their imitation: because in the close of this verse he turns his address to them, saying, *So run, that ye may obtain*; and in the next verse speaks of himself and them in common, as *striving to obtain an incorruptible crown*.

† Among the famous names of Greece.

those that were kept at the *Isthmus* of *Corinth*, were called the *Isthmian* games. These the apostle here, and in the three following verses alludes to, as well known among the *Corinthians*; and particularly to the *racing*, *wrestling*, and *leaping* or *casting*, used on those occasions, which, together with *leaping* and *casting*, were the principal exercises in these games. See Mr Kennet's notes.

So run that ye may obtain.

mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: (Phil. iii. 14.) and ye have the highest encouragement hereunto, inasmuch as not only one, but *many*, together with myself; (*ver.* 19—23.) yea, *all that run with faith and patience*, shall have the honour and advantage of receiving *the reward of the inheritance from the Lord Christ.* (Col. iii. 24.)

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.

25 And as, at those public games, *Wrestlers* and *boxers* are also engaged in combats; every one of them, (*αγωνιστής*) who would contend in good earnest for victory, even to an agony, is very exact in his regimen, with respect to diet and discipline, that he may be the better prepared for the conflict: So we ought not to indulge our sensitive appetites unto any excess; nor unto the eating of such meats, as may be an occasion of stumbling to our brethren; (*chap* viii. 9, 13.) but should mortify all worldly and sinful affections, and abstain from every thing, that would be an hindrance to us in our Christian warfare, in which we wrestle against the most potent adversaries, (*Eph.* vi. 12.) and are called to fight *the good fight of faith*, and *lay hold on eternal life*: (1 Tim. vi. 12.) And we should be the more abundantly excited to this, when we consider that those gamesters take all their care and pains, only for the sake of obtaining a garland of flowers, or of pine, myrtle, olive, bays, laurel, or the like, which is a poor fading, withering, and perishing crown, of trifling value, and only serving to puff up their pride and vanity, without any solid advantage to themselves; but *that* which lies before us, to animate our utmost care and diligence, mortification and self-denial, is no less, than an inheritance, and crown of glory, of infinite worth and duration, *incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away.* (1 Pet. i. 4. and v. 4.)

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one

26 I therefore, under this apprehension of things, stretch forward with all my might, like the *racers*, that I may finish my course with joy, &c. (*Acts* xx. 24.) and this, I do, not without minding, and keeping within the rule of duty; but studiously and carefully attending to it, as knowing that I cannot expect to be crowned, unless, in this manner, I *strive lawfully*; (2 Tim. ii. 5.) any more than they that run for the prize can win it, unless they keep within the lines, which are wont to be plainly drawn for marking out their course: (See the note on 2 Cor. x. 13.) nor do I engage herein, as one doubtful in myself, whether I, running in the prescribed path of duty, shall have the honour of being crowned at last, or not; as they are, who know that

one that beateh  
the air :

one only receives the prize ; (ver. 24.) but I press on with an intire satisfaction in myself, that in this way I, through grace, shall certainly obtain it. In like manner, relying on the strength of Christ, I exert myself, with the utmost vigour, like *Boxers* and *Wrestlers* in fighting against all opposition ; not in jest, nor barely to prepare for the combat, as they do, when they are using themselves to their respective exercises, only for diversion, or ostentation, or for improving themselves in these arts, by stretching forth their arms and legs, and throwing them about with a flourish in the air, while there is no enemy to encounter them.

27 But I keep  
under my body,  
and bring it into  
subjection : lest  
that by any  
means, when I  
have preached to  
others

27 But as, when they come to close combat, they give their antagonists such violent strokes, as make them black and blue ; and throw them down to get the mastery over them \* : So I, labouring in good earnest, by divine assistance, to gain an intire conquest over all my corruptions, contend vehemently against them, by faith and evangelical repentance, watchfulness, fasting and prayer, mortifications of the flesh, and self-denials, with regard to all indifferent, (*chap. viii. 13.*) as well as unlawful things ; and by these means I am helped to wound and bring down the whole body of sin, together with all my fleshly inclinations : All this I constantly endeavour to do, with the utmost care and caution, and godly jealousy over my own spirit, that as I do not, so I may not run at uncertainties ; (*ver. 26.*) † lest, (were this my

#### N O T E.

\* The terms here rendered, *I keep under*, and *bring into subjection*, (*υποτάσσω καὶ ἐλεγχω*) are agonistical, alluding to a combatant's giving his adversaries black and blue eyes in *cuffing* ; and throwing them down, and getting them under him, in *wrestling*. But it would be very whimsical to imagine that, literally speaking, the apostle beat his own face, or any part of his body, till he made it black and blue ; and it would be downright nonsense to say, that he brought his body under himself, as one combatant did the body of another under him. There is therefore no foundation for popish penances, macerations and scourgings of the body, in these words, which are only strong and lively figures, to signify the mortification of sensitive appetites, and, together with them, of all the evil propensions of the *old man*, the *body of sin*, which is here fitly represented, in allusion to the natural bodies of those, that were wounded and subdued in combat. *Vid. Bez. in loc.*

† It is not reasonable to think that the apostle had any doubt in himself, whether he should be eternally saved, or not ; for he

had said, just before, that he did not run *as uncertainly*, and always spoke with an intire confidence as to his own salvation. But as he well knew, that God did not design his own, or any other person attaining it, without the use of proper means, which are connected with the end, both in the divine purpose, and in the constitution and fulfilment of the new covenant ; so he excited himself, by these considerations, to the utmost diligence in mortifying the corruptions of nature, which, on a supposition that he were careless in subduing them, and should live under the power of them, would be inconsistent with his assured hopes of eternal life : but it by no means follows from hence, that he was under any apprehensions of his being suffered to do to inconsistent a thing, and of thereby miscarrying, and being eventually rejected as a false professor, or unsuitable minister, in the great day of account. And he seems, according to his wonted admirable wisdom, to have transferred these things, as it were in a figure, to himself, to shew the inseparable connection between the means and end, and so to stir up all other professing

others, I myself should be a call-away.

my case) after I have preached the gospel to others for their salvation, I myself, instead of being partaker with them, (*ver.* 23.) should give way to any unfaithfulness, neglects, and self-indulgences, or other criminal temper and conduct, which, were I under their dominion, would, in the nature of things, and by the gospel constitution, issue in my being (*ἀπιστία*) rejected of God, as an insincere and slothful servant; and in my labours being disapproved of him, and judged unfit to be rewarded in the great day of account. And this I mention as my own practice, to excite you to the like circumspection, care, and diligence, mortification of sin and self-denial, lest any of you, through allowed defects therein, should be disapproved of God in the final judgment.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How ungenerous is it, to argue against the temporal rights and privileges of the ministers of Christ, only because sometimes, in condescension to the wants, weaknesses, and prejudices of the people, they are so self-denying, as not to make use of them! They have as much liberty to marry a sister in Christ, that may be suitable to them, as any other men; and they, upon principles of reason and divine revelation, have just claims to a comfortable maintenance of themselves and their families, at the expence of the people, on account of their sacred employment for the good of their souls. This is plainly their due by the law of common equity, as in their religious office and character, they are like foldiers and shepherds, and labourers, that plant and sow, plow and thresh; as also by the antient law of God, relating to the ox, which trod out the corn; and to the priests and Levites, who attended the business of the altar; yea, and by the command of Christ under the New Testament-dispensation, that they, who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. But as these are rights, which, on prudential considerations, may be waved, what an honour is it to those ministers, that choose to yield them up, when their own circumstances admit of it, and the edification of their people requires it! how much better is it to pursue the great ends of a gospel ministry for saving souls, and becoming all things to all men, as far as may be without sin, for gaining them over to Christ, than to live in the midst of ease and affluence by means of their liberality! and how pleasant are the reflections of a sincere Christian's mind on his abstaining from some instances of a liberty, which is lawful in itself, when the use of it would be stumbling, or ensnaring to the consciences of his brethren, and a hindrance to their edification! Only let him always remember that, as he is under the moral law to Christ, he should never do any thing sinful, for the pleasing of any one whatsoever. But, O what faithfulness, care, and pains, in dependence on divine grace, are necessary, both to ministers and people, for running, and fighting in their Christian course and warfare, according to the prescribed rules of the word of God, and for duly governing their passions and appetites, tempers and conduct, in order to their receiving an incorruptible crown of glory! And, with what humble and holy jealousy over themselves, should they, that preach to others, take heed to their own souls, and to their doctrines and practices; that neither they themselves, nor their labours be disapproved, and rejected, by their Judge, in the great day; but that they may be partakers with those, whom they have been the instruments of converting, in all the saving benefits of the gospel!

### N O T E.

professing Christians, and ministering servants, to like care and diligence; and particularly to pave the way for the *Corinthians*

receiving his awful admonitions without offence, which immediately follow at the beginning of the next chapter.



## C H A P. X.

*The apostle, returning to his argument about things offered to idols, reminds the Corinthians of the great privileges, and yet terrible overthrow of the Israelites in the wilderness, 1,—5. Cautions them against all idolatrous, and other sinful practices, like theirs, lest they themselves, notwithstanding their gospel privileges, should also, fall under God's sore displeasure, 6,—12. Comforts them against temptations, 13. Shews that partaking, in a religious way, of things offered to idols, was inconsistent with their having communion with Christ at his table, 14,—22. But allows of eating them, as common food sold in the market, or at a civil entertainment: provided it be with a single eye to the glory of God, and without offence to the consciences of others, 23,—33.*

## TEXT.

MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to return to your question, (*chap. viii.*) about partaking of idolatrous feasts, which, I perceive, some would persuade you may be done without danger of incurring God's displeasure, because, in the greatness of his favour, he has made you his church and people, and visibly taken you into all the privileges of the gospel state: But to guard you, my dear brethren in Christ, against such a presumptuous thought, I would remind you of God's dealings with the church of *Israel*, our predecessors in his covenant, and the natural ancestors of those of us, who are of *Jewish* extract. Observe, I beseech you, what high privileges God favoured them with, as his peculiar people: When he delivered them out of *Egypt*, they were all under the protection, guidance and refreshment of the cloud of glory, that eminent symbol of his gracious presence, which sometimes spread like a canopy over them, to screen them from the piercing beams of the sun, by day; (*Psal. cv. 39.*) and at others, was miraculously formed into a cloudy pillar, which, on its bright side, gave light to them; and, on its dark side, concealed them from their pursuing enemies, by night; (*Exod. xiv. 19, 20.*) and they all, to a man, passed with safety through the red sea, as on dry land, while the waters stood as a wall on each side of them; (*Psal. lxxvi. 6. and lxxviii. 13. and Exod. xiv. 21, 22.*) but, as soon as they reached the shore, the waters returned to the overflowing and drowning the *Egyptians*. (*Exod. xiv. 27, 28.*) All which was typical of the spiritual light and protection, comfort and salvation, now brought in to the people of God, by that redemption, which is in Christ Jesus; and of the ever-

lasting destruction of them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son.

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the clouds, and in the sea;

2 And all the church of *Israel*, both young and old, male and female, were baptized into the covenant, which God made with them by the ministry of *Moses*; their leader; and so were brought under obligations to believe, and obey the divine law of that typical Mediator and deliverer, by their passing under the cloud, which hung over them \*, and through the sea, whose waters stood in heaps on their right hand, and on their left; which was typical of christian baptism, whereby we and our children are visibly and solemnly initiated in God's covenant, devoted to him, and engaged to be his.

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat:

3 And when they came into the wilderness, they all partook of one and the same food, even of the *Manna*, which fell round about their tents; and which, in its signification, was, in a manner, the same to them and us; and so may be called spiritual meat, not only as it came down from the clouds of heaven, by the ministry of angels; but as it was *primarily* typical of Christ, and his spiritual benefits, and of feeding by faith on him, for the nourishment of our souls to eternal life; (*John* vi. 32, &c.) and was *secondarily* typical of our sacramentally eating bread at the Lord's table, in commemoration of his broken body.

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: (for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that

4 They likewise all drank of one and the same water, which was miraculously provided for them, when they were reduced to the greatest extremity of drought; (*Exod.* xvii. 6. and *Numb.* xx. 11.) and which may be called the same spiritual drink, in its signification, to them and us, as it had a typical reference *primarily* to gospel benefits by Jesus Christ, which are represented as the living waters, that he gives to them who believe in him; (*John* iv. 10, 14. and vii. 37,—39) and *secondarily* to the cup in the Lord's supper, which is drank in commemoration of his blood shed: for they drank of the waters that gushed out of the rock at *Horeb*, which was smitten by the rod of *Moses*, their lawgiver, and ran in dry places like a river, (*Psal.* cv. 41.) and accompanied them ( *ακολουθεῖς* ) for their relief, in their several journeyings for many years through the wilderness

#### N O T E.

\* It is probable, says *Ekins*, that they were sprinkled here and there, with drops of water from the sea, which stood upright on both sides, as they passed along, and from the cloud that was spread over them; by which the sacrament of baptism might be the more evidently signified. Vid. *Efl.* in l c; And if it be supposed, that here is any allusion to the Mode of baptism, one would

think it refers rather to an administration of it by sprinkling, than by immersion; since the *Egyptians*, that were drowned in the sea, were baptized by the waters covering them, rather than the *Israelites*, that went on dry land, and could be no other way washed than with drops that might fall from the cloud and the dashings of the waves.

that rock was  
Christ:) ness: And that rock prefigured and signified Christ, the rock of ages \*, who was indeed himself all along graciously present with them, in his divine nature, and visible emblems, for their refreshment and supply; and who has now been smitten in his human nature, by the rod of the law, in the hand of justice, when he *bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness in his blood, by whose stripes we are healed.* (Isa. liii. 5. Zech. xiii. 1, 7. and 1 Pet. ii. 24.)

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

5 But notwithstanding all these peculiar and glorious privileges of an external nature, which every one of them were favoured with, as God's visible church, there were vast multitudes of them, with whom he was highly offended by their unbelief, idolatry, murmuring, and other provocations: For as, on these accounts, he *swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest;* (Psal. xc. 11.) so the whole of that generation, from twenty years old and upwards, except *Joshua and Caleb,* (Numb. xiv. 28, 29, compared with *chap. xvi. 64, 65.*) were in his righteous judgment, by one means or other, cut off in the wilderness; and many of them fell short of the heavenly inheritance, as well as of the promised land, its type; though *Moses and Aaron,* and others of them were eternally saved.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things

6 Now these things came to pass, and were recorded, as figures (*τύποι*) of what is to be expected in like cases; and as examples of sin and punishment in that professing people, for a caution and warning to us, who succeed them in their visible church state, and covenant privileges, that we might not imagine ourselves to be secure from like punishments, if we be guilty of like crimes; and particularly, that we might take heed of indulging sensitive appetites to any excess, or of coveting such things, as are unlawful to us, like that of the eating

#### N O T E.

\* Dr *Stuckford* thinks, that the apostle here speaks, not of the rock at *Horeb*, but of *Christ*, who, though invisible, was the spiritual support of the *Israelites* in the wilderness: The rock at *Horeb*, struck by the rod of *Moses*, sent forth waters; but the benefit was owing, not to the rock but to *Christ*, who was the spiritual and invisible rock of his people, who by his power gave them this supply; and whose presence was with them, not at this time only, but in all their journeyings. See his *Connect.* Vol. iii. pag. 24, 25. I have taken this thought into the paraphrase, though not, with him, to the exclusion of the other sense which I think is sufficiently supported by *Exod. xvii. 9.* and *Psal. cv. 41.* and is easily reconciled

with *Moses's* striking the rock a second time in another place, for a fresh supply of waters, about 28 years afterwards, *Exod. xvii. 6, 7.* compared with *Numb. xx. 11, 13.* (See *Universal Hist.* Vol. i. pag. 511.) For at that time, God might order the waters to gush forth for *Israel's* farther trial; or their former encampments might be in lower ground, in which the waters from the first rock might flow after them; but their present station might be in ground too high for the streams to ascend in their natural course. For the solution of this and of another difficulty (if it be one) taken from their, soon after this last miracle, buying water of the *Edomites*, and digging wells. See *Mr. T. J. Alsted's* works, Vol. i. p. 377.

things, as they also lusted.

eating of meat offered to idols, while it would be to the wounding and stumbling of weak consciences, (*chap. viii. 12; 13.*) and while providence affords us other wholesome food; even as the *Israelites*, not contented with the *Manna*, which God had provided for them, sinfully and impatiently desired *flesh to eat, and the fish, the garlick, and onions of Egypt.* (*Numb. xi. 4, 5, 6.*) Let us take heed of every thing of this nature, lest *the wrath of the Lord should be kindled against us*, and one way or other smite us, as it did them, *while the meat was yet in their mouths.* (*Numb. xi. 33. and Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.*)

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7 Nor let any of you go into idolatrous practices; as some of them did, in an astonishing manner, according to what is written concerning them, saying, (*Exod. xxxii. 6. 19.*) *the people sat down to eat and to drink in their feasting on their sacrifices, which they had offered to the golden calf, as some do now a-days on idol sacrifices in idol temples; and then they rose up, and danced before it*, to express their homage and joy, according to the idolatrous rites of the heathen in worshipping their false gods. Take heed of symbolizing with that people, in partaking of idolatrous feasts, with a conscience of the idol, or in its temple in honour to it; (*chap. viii. 7. 10.*) lest as *the wrath of the Lord, waxed hot against them, and there fell of them that day, about three thousand men;* (*Exod. xxxii. 10, 28.*) so God should visit you with some awful judgment.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

8 Nor let any of us be guilty of the abominable sin of uncleanness in any form whatsoever, which some of them afterwards committed with the daughters of *Moab*, according to the filthiest custom of the heathens, at some of their religious feasts, in honour of their idols; and so highly incensed was the indignation of the holy and jealous God against them for these, both corporal and spiritual whoredoms, that three and twenty thousand of them were slain in one day, by his immediate hand, besides another thousand, that were executed by the judges for that sin, which made the whole number of them twenty and four thousand. (*Numb. xxv. 1,—9.*) Let us take heed then of every kind and degree of lewdness \*, for which *Corinth* especially is so infamous, and

to

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\* At *Corinth*, as *Strabo* tells us, (*Lib. ii. cap. 16.*) there was a temple dedicated to *Venus*, with above a thousand priestesses, all common strumpets, belonging to it. Hence the detestable prostitutions among them, if any professing Christians were defiled with them, were joined as well as corporal whoredoms, and so was that, which *Israel* commit-

ted with the daughters of *Moab* at their feasts upon their sacrifices. I have therefore thought proper to keep up a hint of this in the paraphrase; though, as the idolatry of Christians, which is spiritual adultery, was spoken of in the foregoing verse, I take *Fornication* here to relate principally to that flagrant sin itself, which so abounded at *Corinth*, and too much

to which it has so many temptations; lest for that, as well as for spiritual fornications, in paying religious honours to false Gods, we come under like severe rebukes with that people of old: For *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, let their profession, external privileges, and relation to him, be what they will. (*Heb. xiii. 4.*)

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

9 Nor let any of us distrust the power, faithfulness, and grace of Christ, to help us under our difficulties, discouragements, and dangers; nor, by one and another provocation, try his patience and forbearance towards us, (*αὐτὸν κκι*) even as some of them, *when they were much discouraged because of the way*, (*Numb. xxi. 4.*) disbelieved his care and kindness, and tempted, provoked, and spake against him, who is the most high God, and the angel of the covenant, that was with them to conduct and lead them through the desert, saying, *Can God furnish a table in the Wilderness?* (*Psal. lxxviii. 17, 18, 19.* compared with *Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.* and see the note on *Acts vii. 38.*) And for this their sinful distrust of him and provoking behaviour towards him, who had given them gracious promises, and signal proofs of his power and goodness, they were grievously bitten, and many of them mortally wounded by the fiery serpents, which he sent to destroy them. (*Numb. xxi. 5, 6.*) Let us guard against the like unbelief and provocations, lest he leave us to the power of that *old serpent called the devil*, (*Rev. xii. 9.*)

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

10 Nor let any of you be dissatisfied, repine, and complain at any of God's ways and dispensations, nor at any sufferings for the sake of Christ and restraints from sensitive appetites, which ye are called to; nor yet murmur, through the affliction of others, against us, the apostles of Christ, on account of what we deliver from him, which is, in effect, murmuring against Christ himself, whose servants we are; as the *Israelites* murmured, in a provoking manner, at God's dealings with them, and against *Moses* and *Aaron*, which he called murmuring against himself, when the spies brought an evil report on the land, and when *Corah* and his company gathered themselves against those his servants; and, for their discontented temper and carriage, many of them were cut off by the immediate hand of God, or by a destroying angel. (*Numb. xiv. and xvi. Chapters.*) Have a care of giving way to  
such

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continued to infect some of the members of the church there, as appears from what cl

apostle says about them, *chap. v. 11.* and 2 *Cor. xii. 21.*

11 Now all these things happened unto them for example; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful.

such a grumbling rebellious spirit; lest God also visit you with some desolating judgment.

11 Now all these things, relating to the sins and punishments of God's ancient professing people, that were so highly favoured of him, beset them, (as I have said, *ver.* 6. and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress your minds) as types and patterns of what we are to expect, under our gospel privileges, if we follow their example in sinning against God; and they are left on record, and handed down in the sacred writings to us for our caution, who live at the close of the *Jewish* age\*, and under the last dispensation of grace which God designs for the church in this world, that we may take warning from them, so as to avoid their sin, and escape their punishment.

12 The improvement therefore which ought to be made of all this is, that the self-opiniated professor who because of his light and external privileges, presumptuously imagines that he stands safe in the liberty of the gospel, and is in no danger of sinning so as to provoke divine wrath against him, should see to it (*SACRERIS*) that he don't deceive his own soul, by fancying himself to be what he is not; and every one should be watchful and prayerful, and use all means of God's appointment, in an humble dependance on his grace, to prevent backslidings and apostacies; lest, notwithstanding all his high pretences and vain confidences, he fall into sin and ruin, as the *Israelites* did of old.

13 But for the encouragement of the humble and faithful among you, who are dissident of themselves, and place their entire trust in Christ, and in the grace of God thro' him, for preservation in the way of their duty†, Let it be remembered by such of you, that hitherto

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\* The Jews divided the time of the world's continuance into three ages; the first, *before* the law; the second, *under* the law, and the third, *after* the law; and as the age *under* the law, which was the continuation of the *Jewish* ages, was just then expired, and the age *after* the law, under the Messiah, which was the last age of the whole world, had then commenced, the ends of ages, (*τα τέταρτα αἰώνων*) may resp. Q. Both the expiration of divine dispensations under the two *Jewish* ages, and the introduction of the third and last, as the concluding period, that should abide to the end of the world. See Dr. *Whitby's* notes.

† It appears to me, that the apostle, in this verse, speaks of *true* believers, in opposition to those, whom he had spoken of just before, (*ver.* 12.) as (*Ἰσχυρὸν*) *strong* to them-

selves and others, or only thinking that they stood: For what he here says about the *faithfulness* of God, in *not* suffering them to be tempted above that they were able, &c. could not relate to such members of the church at Corinth, as, being only self-confident professors, either had already fallen, or were in danger of falling, to their own destruction. But were he also supposed to give the foregoing caution to true believers, *their taking heed lest they fall*, may be considered as a needful guard against spiritual pride and carelessness in them, and as a proper and appointed means, by which God in faithfulness fulfils his gracious promises of *not* suffering them to be tempted above that they are able, &c. or it may only intimate that, unless they should take heed to their standing, they might fall

faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

therto no trials of any kind, whether in a way of affliction and tribulation from the hand of God, or men or in a way of inducement to sin, through the power of remaining corruption, or of Satan and this evil world have ever come upon you, beyond what are incident to human nature, and usually befall mankind; and are to be expected in this present imperfect state; and may be bore and vanquished, through divine assistance, by the holy fortitude and resolution of even mortal men: And (4<sup>th</sup>) ye may be well assured, for time to come, that, as God has made many great and precious promises of all seasonable supports and aids to his people, he is unchangeable in his truth and faithfulness, to perform them to every one of you, that put your trust in him; who, in the wise and holy disposals of his providence and grace, will not permit you to be exercised in any trials beyond your strength, which shall be either proportioned to them, or they to it: But as he knows your infirmity, and how difficult it would be for you to be always burthened with them, whenever he suffers them to beset you, he will graciously open a way of your deliverance, in due time, from them, or from falling into sin and destruction by them, that ye may not be tired out, and overcome through their long continuance, nor faint under them; but may be enabled to hold on your way, and hold on your way, and hold out to the end, when the Lord will deliver you out of them all. (*Psal.* xxxiv. 19.)

14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

14 Therefore, my dearly beloved friends and brethren, awed by these dreadful examples on one hand, and encouraged by hopes of all needful assistances on the other, flee with the utmost resolution, speed, and vigour, to the farthest distance possible, as from every other sin, so in a special manner from idolatry; avoid it as ye would the plague; and shun all approaches to this detestable iniquity, and all occasions and appearances of it, that ye may have nothing to do with it, in any form whatsoever; and particularly, not in partaking of *Pagan-feasts* upon their sacrifices in their idol temples, which I have been cautioning you against, (*chap.* viii.) and now, resuming the argument, shall further explain and inforce upon you.

15 I speak as to wise men: judge ye

15 What I have delivered, and am now going to add upon this head, is proposed to you as men, who value yourselves upon your superior knowledge and learning

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fall to such a degree, as would awaken God's displeasure against them in some way of his awful judgments, though not to their eternal

perdition; as was the case with many of the *Israelites* that sinned, and fell in the wilderness, though they got safe to heaven.

ye what I say.

learning \* ; and as men, who it is to be presumed, are acquainted with the principles of the Christian religion ; yea, and as men, who I charitably believe are, many of you at least, endued with spiritual wisdom and understanding : I therefore appeal to your own reason and conscience, as *knowing* men ; and desire you to consider the weight and force of the following arguments.

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?

16 When we communicate in the Lord's supper, which is a religious feast upon the sacrifice of Christ ; and therein drink of the cup of wine, which signifies his blood, (*Matth. xxvi. 27, 28, 29.*) and may signify be called the cup of blessing, which we, who administer that ordinance, bless † : Is not what the communicants do, in drinking the wine of this cup, an open profession, token, and means of their holy fellowship with Christ, in the virtue and benefits of his precious blood, which was shed for the remission of their sins ? And is it not a public acknowledgment of their obligation, and of their purpose, by his grace to yield themselves up, in a way of obedience, to him, and to God through him, as a people in covenant and in state of friendship with him ? In partaking also of the other symbolical element, to wit, *the bread*, a loaf or cake of which we, the ministering servants of Christ, break into several pieces, in order to its being distributed and eaten : Is not our feeding on this, which still continues to be in its own substance *bread*, (*See the notes on Luke xxii. 19, 20.*) a visible sign and means of our having spiritual communion with Christ in his broken body, which is represented by it, as he *was wounded for our transgressions* ? (*Isa. liii. 5.*) And is not this a test and bond of unfeigned devotedness to him, and to the father through him ? Ye very well know that all this is the avowed design of our religious eating and drinking at his table, in which we also have a professed communion one with another in our communion with Christ ?

17 For we being many are one bread

17 For as the bread taken and eaten in that ordinance is of one loaf, or one sort of substance, broken for us all, and is made up of many grains of corn, which are ground

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\* By *wise men*, the apostle seems most directly to mean the false teachers, and their adherents, that were in vainly conceited of their own wisdom ; and yet, as he appeals to the judgment of the whole church, in what he was saying, we may reasonably suppose him to include those, that understood the doctrines of Christ, and those that were made wise to salvation.

† The *cup of blessing*, which we bless, may be so called, because according to the institu-

tion and example of Christ, his servants solemnly set it apart, for sacred use by thanksgiving and prayer, and beg a divine blessing upon it, for the spiritual benefit of the receiver ; and because they who partake of it, with faith, and other suitable graces, enjoy up their joyful adoration, blessing, and praise to God for a crucified Christ, and for all the great and glorious deliverances and blessings, which he, in his superlative endearing love, has purchased for them by his



bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

ground, and moulded into one lump; so it intimates that we, the members of the visible church, which consists of many individual Christians, are hereby in a symbolical manner considered as, and own ourselves to be, united together, by faith, and love, into one holy lump in conformity to Christ, and into one mystical body of which he is the head †: For we are all partakers of that one loaf or substance, which signifies Christ the bread of life, who came down from heaven; (*John vi. 51.*) and so we have fellowship one with another in our communion with him: (The like may be said of our drinking of the wine, which is made of the juices of many grapes, and signifies the blood of Christ.) And when these sacramental elements are received with faith in the object, represented by them, we have spiritual and saving communion with Christ, and communications of blessings from him, in virtue of his atoning sacrifice.

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

18 Observe likewise how the matter stands with respect to the religious feast on the peace offering, which the *Israelites*, that were circumcised in the flesh, were admitted to eat of; (*Lev. vii. 15.*) and which the carnal *Jews*, that rest in ceremonial and bodily services, continue to do at this day: When they feast upon the remainder of those sacrifices, which were offered upon the altar, do they not thereby profess and own, that they have communion with, and pay their devotions to that God, to whom those meats have been consecrated; and that they have joint fellowship with him in the sacrifices, as offered on the altar for them; he having one share of it, and they another?

19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

19 Now to apply these thoughts to the point in hand, what is my meaning in alledging these instances? Do I hereby intimate, in contradiction to what I have said before, (*chap. viii. 4.*) that there is any thing of divinity in the nominal Gods of the heathen? Or that meats being offered in sacrifice to them, or to their images, makes any alteration in these meats, themselves; so as to render them unfit in their own nature, for the food of man, or as to defile him, who eats them in circumstances that do not signify his partaking of them *as sacrificed*

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† These words (*οἱ ἡς ἀφ' οὗ, ἡ ἐκαστος οἱ πολλοί ὅμοι*) may, as several have observed, be more justly and orderly rendered, *because the bread is one, we being many, are one body*; and the apostle plainly alludes to the custom of breaking a loaf, or cake of bread, into several pieces, for distribution among the members of the church, that they might eat of it,

at the Lord's Supper, as Christ broke the bread, at the first institution of that ordinance, and as the Jews were wont to do at their passover, which shews how far distant from the primitive institution and practice, the usage of the papists is, who deliver whole wafers, instead of pieces of bread, to every one of their communicants.

*crificed*, nor give an occasion of *stumbling and offence* to others? No, I am as far from admitting any thing of this kind, as the most zealous advocates for an universal liberty to take part in idol entertainments can be.

10 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

20 But what I insist upon is, that the heathen sacrifices are offered to *Demons*, (*δαίμονες*) which, whatever their worshippers imagine, or intend, are no better than wicked and impure spirits; they are offered, I say, to these false deities, and not to the only living and true God; so that, as appears, by parity of reason, from what has been said about partaking of the Lord's Supper, and of the peace offerings, to feast on the remainder of those sacrifices in *Pagan Temples*, where they are offered, is to have fellowship and communion with the idols, to which they are consecrated: And I would by no means have you go into any practices, that by just construction, are holding communion with such unclean spirits as *Demons*, and with idolaters therein.

11 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

21 Ye cannot, in any consistency with the honour of God, with your Christian character and profession, or with your own edification and safety, drink of the wine, which is symbolical of the blood of Christ, and which he has commanded you to do in remembrance of him; and of the wine which in heathen libations, is consecrated to their *Demons*, (*δαίμονων*) and is drank in honour of them: Nay, it is a direct contradiction to suppose, that ye can have communion with the Lord Jesus, and with one another, in partaking of bread and wine, as his guests, at his table, according to his appointment; and have communion likewise with *Demons*, and their worshippers, at their idolatrous feasts; nor ought ye to attempt this, or do any thing that has the least appearance of it; since the very design of Christianity is to destroy all worshipping of those, that *by nature are no Gods*. (Gal. iv. 8.)

12 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy—

22 Shall we then, who profess to be espoused to Christ, dare to provoke him to jealousy \*, by paying religious honours to any fictitious deities, or graven images, in competition, or together with him, which is spiritual whoredom, as it was in his antient people the *Jews*? (*Deut. xxxii. 21.*) what a desperate risk is this to run? Since in that case, our eating and drinking at his

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to be a direct reference to the first and second commandments, *Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5.* and as Christ is undoubtedly the Lord meant in the foregoing verse, which speaks of his cup, and his table, it is most natural to consider him, as the Lord intended

in this verse, whom we ought not to *provoke to jealousy*; and, by consequence, as included at least, in the God, who declared himself to be a jealous God, in the second commandment; particularly with respect to worshipping him alone.

jealousy? are we stronger than he?

13 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

14 Let no man seek his own: but every man another's wealth.

15 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles that eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

16 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

his table, (*ver.* 21..) will no more secure us from punishment now, than their eating and drinking what may be called the same spiritual meat and drink did them, when they were guilty of idolatry and other sins. (*ver.* 3—10.) and if his wrath should be kindled against any of us for this, or other crying abominations, are we able to withstand, escape, or bear it? Alas! we are no match for the Almighty. (*Nah.* i. 6. and *Exek.* xxii. 14.)

23 Furthermore, as to the plea of those, that think there can be no harm in eating things offered to idols, provided there be no religious respect designed, or paid to the idol itself thereby; even to such I would say, it is indeed, by the law of Christian liberty, allowable for me, (which also is the case of any other believer) to do as I judge may be best in all things of an indifferent nature, such as the eating of meats is, in itself considered, whether they have been offered to idols, or no; but it is not at all times, and in all circumstances, fit and convenient to go to the utmost extent of this liberty: I might with a good conscience, and without violating any law of God, practise all such things on proper occasions; but to do it, when it would be matter of offence, or stumbling to others, or of drawing them into sin, would be to hinder, instead of promoting their spiritual advantage; and so better omitted than done.

24 In cases of this nature, no one ought to study and pursue such things as are only agreeable to himself, or may serve his own pleasure, humour, or temporal benefit; but every one should think himself bound in conscience to do what may *please his neighbour for his good to edification.* (*Rom.* xv. 2.)

25 Though, as has been shewn, (*ver.* 20—22.) it would be extremely criminal and dangerous, for any of you to eat of meats offered to idols, in their temples, or at any religious feast, instituted to their honour; yet, so far as ye yourselves only are concerned, ye may indeed lawfully eat any thing, that is exposed to sale, as common food, in a public market, without troubling yourselves with scrupulous enquiries, whether it has been offered to an idol or not; (see the note on *chap.* viii. 1.) the food itself being no way affected by that circumstance; nor bought and used with any relation to the idol, but only as the bounty of Providence.

26 For as God is the great Creator, proprietor, and disposer, sovereign Lord and governor of the whole earth, and of all its fruits and products; (*Psal.* xxiv. 1.) so he has given them for the service of men; and all their rich variety, for necessity and delight, are sanctified

fied to the believer's use ; infomuch that he may lawfully eat of them under the gospel dispensation, which has abolished the ceremonial distinctions of them, that were of a typical nature under the law ; (1 Tim. iv. 4.) and in which Christ, as mediator, is Lord of all.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go ; whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

27 Again, if any of your hearben friends, or acquaintance desire you to take a meal with them, at their own houses ; and convenience, good manners or hopes of promoting their spiritual welfare, or some other prudent considerations, incline you to accept of their courteous invitation ; ye need not make any scruple of eating such food, as the table is furnished with for your entertainment ; nor hamper your own consciences by asking nice questions, whether any part of the provision is the remainder of what has been sacrificed to an idol, or not ; since you professedly partake of it only as a common meal.

28 But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his sake that sheweth it, and for conscience sake. For the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof.

28 But if he who invited you, or some other person present, should tell you, that what is set before you has been consecrated to an idol ; and should thereby intimate his apprehension, that your eating of it would be practically to allow of the religious honours which were therein paid to it ; then, to shew your utter detestation of such an high crime against the majesty of heaven, and of all approaches towards it, don't so much as taste of it out of regard to him, who mentioned this on purpose to try you, and to see whether you would countenance idolatrous worship : Abstain likewise in such cases out of regard to conscience, that it may neither be misguided and drawn into sin : nor be wounded, troubled, and stumbled by your doing what might have been avoided since there is enough for you, in other supplies of providence, without it : For, as I said but now, in a different view of the argument, (*ver. 26.*) \* the earth, with all the vegetable and animal food that is produced or sustained by it, is what God has made, and given for the use of man ; and, in such an abundance, you may have a sufficiency for the refreshment of nature, though you refrain from eating such food, as you are, in this manner, and with such an intent, assured has been offered to idols.

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own

29 But when I say, eat not of it for conscience sake I don't mean merely your own conscience, which can distinguish between the meat itself, and its being offered to idols, and is no further concerned in this case, than to heed

#### N O T E.

\* I don't see but that this passage, *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*, may be retained, and is properly enough repeated

here, according to the view given of it in the paraphrase ; though some Greek copies, and some versions have dropt it.

man, but of the others: for why is my liberty judged of another mans conscience?

take heed of doing what may be accounted dishonourable to Christ and religion, and may prove a snare to others; but I principally mean the conscience of another person that may be grieved, or else emboldened to do what is unlawful to him, by your example, though your own conscience abstracted from these circumstances, might receive no harm by it; and this is reason sufficient for your abstaining: For to put myself in your place, Why should I use my Christian liberty at such an imprudent and unseasonable rate, as to occasion another man's conscience to pass a wrong judgment upon me, for doing that, which, with my just sense of things, I might warrantably do, were it not for one way or other injuring people of different sentiments.

30 For, if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

30 For if, through the bounty of a kind providence I have opportunity, and, through the grace of the gospel, I have a liberty, of feeding indifferently upon whatever is set before me for the sustenance of the body; yet why should I indulge myself so far, as to make *my good to be evil spoken of*, (Rom. xiv. 16.) by giving an occasion of reproachful censure upon me, for eating such meats, as I receive with prayer to God for his blessing upon them, and with a religious and joyful gratitude to him, both for his providing them, and allowing me to partake of them, though the slander by may think I can't do it without sin?

31 Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

31 To wind up therefore the present argument with two or three general rules, which are of extensive use in other cases, as well as this; Let it be your great concern, as Christians, that in all common actions of life, such as eating and drinking; and in all your use of gospel liberty with regard to things in themselves indifferent, such as meats and drinks of every kind; yea, that in all things whatsoever, whether of a civil or religious nature, ye keep the glory of God in view, as your ultimate end and behave in such a manner, as ye in conscience apprehend, may, by his blessing, be most conducive to that noble end.

32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

32 Always endeavour to avoid every thing that might obstruct the conversion of *Jews*, or *Heathens*, and prejudice the minds of either of them against Christ and the gospel; and take heed of doing any thing that might be matter of grief and stumbling to *Jewish* Christians who are exceeding scrupulous about meats, and jealous of every thing that has the least appearance of idolatry, or that might be matter of suspicion to *Gentile* converts as though your professions of abhorring idols were not sincere, and they might persist in paying some religious respect

respect to them ; or that might be matter of grief and discouragement on one hand, or of perversion on the other, to any member of the church, which God has erected under the gospel state, whether they be weaker or stronger believers.

33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

33 On the contrary, labour, in the strength of Christ to imitate my example, who readily deny myself in many instances, and make it the governing aim of my conduct to do all that in me lies, to accommodate my behaviour to all sorts of people, in all things, that may be lawfully done, or let alone, as may be most winning upon them, and most subservient to their peace and comfort: (*Chap. ix. 20.*) And I therein seek; not to do what might be most agreeable and convenient to myself, or gratifying to my own ease and inclinations, humour, or worldly advantage ; but what may be most for the spiritual benefit of others ; to the end that I may be instrumental, in the hand of Christ, to gain many souls over to him ; and to help them forward in the way, for their present edification, and eternal salvation.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How foolish and dangerous is it for any to imagine, that their visible relation to God, and sacramental privileges, like those of Israel under the Old Testament, and of professing Christians under the New, will screen them from the displeasure, and the judgments of God, in case they be guilty of idolatry, uncleanness, tempting of God, or Christ, by unbelief, murmuring against his dispensations, or any other allowed sin ! How should the example of others, in their miscarriages, caution us against provoking the Lord, and against carnal security and self-confidence, lest we fall into their punishments, as well as sins ! But, blessed be God, that his faithfulness and grace are a happy security to truly humble, depending, and watchful believers, that none of their trials should be so uncommon, so great, or so long continued, as to exceed the strength he gives in the way of their duty, to bear them ; or to prevent his making, in due time, a way of escape from them.---How great and holy is our God, and how jealous of his glory, before whom all the idols of the heathen are nothing and vanity ! Whatever their worshippers think of them, they are no better than demons, wicked and impure spirits ; and to pay religious honours to any nominal deities, is to offer the highest affront to the Lord Christ, who is the author and object of our religion, and is by nature God, in opposition to them. How condescending is it in the great God and Saviour, to admit believers to a holy fellowship with him, and to institute an ordinance, peculiarly designed for promoting communion with himself, and with one another, as they are one body, and are all partakers of that one living bread which came down from heaven ! But how inconsistent is it with this communion, to have fellowship with demons, and to go in to any suspicious practices of an idolatrous appearance, that may be occasions of stumbling, grief, and sin to one another ! Even in the use of lawful things, we should have a tender regard to the consciences of others, and deny ourselves in such instances, as are likely to be injurious to them. We should neither imagine, that meats or drinks of any kind are in themselves polluted, or unlawful to use under the gospel dispensation ; nor yet indulge ourselves in a needless and unseasonable use of them, to the offending, or ensnaring of others : For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, which he has given us to be used, either promiscuously, or with restraint, as occasions require. Whether there

fore we eat or drink, or whatever we do in religion, or in common life; let us do all to the glory of God, and in such a manner, as to give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or to any member of the church of Christ, as those who, like the apostle, consult the edification and comfort of others, and seek not our own humour, or secular interests, but their spiritual benefit, that they may be eternally saved.

## C H A P. XI.

*The apostle, after an exhortation to follow him, and a commendation of the church for observing his former orders, 1, 2. Proceeds to censure, and correct some great irregularities among them, in women's speaking publicly with unveiled faces, even under their prophetic impulses, 3,—16. And, in contentions, schisms, and disorderly celebrations of the Lord's Supper, 17,—22. And, to rectify their scandalous abuses of that sacred ordinance, he reminds them of the nature and design of its institution, as he received it from Christ himself, 23,—26. And directs them how to attend upon it in a due manner, and to avoid the danger of unworthily receiving it, 27,—34.*

### TEXT.

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

### PARAPHRASE.

**B**E ye therefore \* imitators (*μιμηται*) of my example, as well as followers of my directions, (*chap. x. 32, 33.*) in condescending to the weaknesses and prejudices of others for their good, and in every thing else, so far, and so far only, as I therein copy after our great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is our only perfect pattern, and in imitating whose religious and moral temper and conduct we cannot err.

<sup>a</sup> Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the

<sup>2</sup> Now, my dear brethren, it is greatly to your honour, and I reflect upon it, and speak of it, with the utmost pleasure and commendation, that the better part of you bear me upon your minds, with an affectionate concern for my apostolic authority, reputation, and comfort in all things; and with a dutiful regard to the main of all the important doctrines of the gospel, which I preached to you †; and that ye observe so many of these

### N O T E S.

\* This verse might have been better made the close of the preceding, than the beginning of this chapter; it having the nearest connection with the last verse of *that*, and none at all with what follows in *this*: And in that connection the argument stands much in the same manner, as it doth on a like subject in *Rom. xv. 2, 3*: There the apostle says, *let every one please his neighbour for his good, to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself, and here he says, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved*: Be ye

followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

† Either the apostle here speaks of only the better part of the church; or else *all things* must admit of some restriction, as it doth in *chap. x. 33.* and very often in other places; and must relate to things different from those, for which he before, and afterwards blamed them, and about which it is not to be supposed that he had given them no directions; Nay, in opposition to their gross abuses of the Lord's Supper, he expressly tells them, that he had delivered to them *what he had received of the Lord*, relating to that

the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and

those rules and orders, relating to the worship of God, which I taught and inculcated upon you, and committed as a trust to you, by word of mouth, when I was personally with you.

3 But as I find that several irregularities have since sprung up among you, one of which relates to women's laying aside their veils, and thereby assuming an air of undue authority over the man †, under pretence of their praying, or prophesying by immediate inspiration, in your public assemblies, (*ver.* 5.) I desire that, for rectifying this disorder, ye would observe, and seriously consider, that by divine constitution, suitable to the natural order of things, the Son of God, who by original right, as Creator, has universal dominion over all his works, is, in his incarnate state, and office capacity, Lord and Governor of all mankind, and, in a peculiar manner, of his people, as he is *the head of the body, and head over all things to the church*; (*Col.* i. 18. and *Eph.* i. 22.) and that the husband, according to the natural superiority of the male sex, is the head of government to his wife, who ought to be in fit and reasonable sub-

jection

#### N O T E S.

holy institution, *ver.* 23. and it is with the most judicious and engaging insinuation, that he here sweetens their spirits, discovers his affection to them, and takes off their prejudices against the reproof he was going to give them, by introducing it with so friendly and cheerful a mention of what was commendable in them. But what he here says about their *keeping the ordinances, as he delivered them*, gives no countenance to unwritten or oral traditions; since he speaks only of what they themselves had heard him deliver by his apostolic authority, and since we have no absolute certainty, in these distant ages, of any thing, that he said to this, or any other church, further than is recorded in the holy scriptures.

† For understanding the following discourse and reasoning to *ver.* 15. it is proper to observe, that though amongst us, in the western part of the world, wearing the hat when men appear in public, is a token of superiority; and being uncovered is a token of inferiority; yet among the ancient eastern nations, women's wearing a veil was a token of modesty and subjection, as in the case of Rebecca, *Gen.* xxiv. 65. and men's going unveiled was a token of the superiority of the male to the female sex; and therefore for women to throw off their veils, and to appear open-faced in public assemblies, even though supposed to speak under divine inspiration, was deemed, by the custom of those times and places, to be assuming an air of

authority, which belongs only to the man, and an inverting the order, in which the God of nature has placed the two sexes. This is what the apostle argues against, and insists that all proper, and especially significative signs of distinction are to be preserved by the woman, even supposing that she prays, or prophesies, which some think here signifies uttering sacred hymns in public assemblies, under an immediate *afflatus* of the spirit; (see *Mr Jes. Mede's* works, p. 77, &c.) and that this gives no dispensation to the contrary: And it is plain, that he here refers only to women publicly praying or prophesying by inspiration; because he reckons these among the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, in *chap.* xii. 10. and *xiv.* 1.—31. and because, in the ordinary course of things, at least, he forbids women's speaking in the church, and that for the same reason, as he here orders that, when they speak by a supernatural gift, it should be with their veils on, viz. to maintain the natural subordination of their sex to the man's, that they might not behave, as if they were on a level with him. *Chap.* xiv. 34—35, and *1 Tim.* ii. 11, 13. (See *Mr Locke's* note on the text before us.) And, perhaps, the practice, which the apostle here inveighs against, was taken up in imitation of the heathen priestesses, who paid their devotions with their hair dishevelled, or hanging loose upon their shoulders at full length. See *Plutarch* and *Hesiod* on the place.



and the head of  
Christ is God.

4 Every man  
praying or proph-  
etizing, having  
his head covered,  
dishonoureth his  
head.

5 But every wo-  
man that prayeth  
or prophesieth  
with her head un-  
covered, disho-  
noureth her head:  
for that is even  
all one as if she  
were shaven.

6 For if the  
woman be not  
covered, let her  
also be shorn: but  
if

jection to him; (*Gen. iii. 16.* and *Eph. v. 23, 24.*) and that God the Father, who has put all things under Christ's feet, has, in that consideration, a superior authority over him \*, who, as Mediator in human nature, is subject to the Father. (*chap. xv. 27, 28.*)

4 As therefore, according to the well known custom of these Eastern nations, it is universally acknowledged, that veiling the head is a badge of modesty and subjection, and that being unveiled is a sign of superiority; so every man, who, by an extraordinary gift of the spirit, (see the note on *ver. 3.*) leads the worship of the church in prayer, as their mouth to God; or in preaching and exhortation, as his mouth to them, for edification and consolation, with a veil upon his head, or any covering on his face, that denotes inferiority and subjection to them, to and for whom he speaks, reflects a dishonour, upon Christ, his political head (*ver. 3.*) † who has given him all the authority that he has any claim to.

5 But, on the contrary, every woman who, even under an *afflatus* of the spirit, pours out her prayers in public to God, or delivers exhortations to the people, with her face unveiled, or in any sort of dress that betokens a superiority, or equality at least, to the male sex, shews a disrespect to the man, as if, on account of her being under divine inspiration, she were not to continue in the modest subjection, which she owes to him, as her political head: (*ver. 3.*) For laying aside her veil is, in effect, the same thing, with regard to this point, as if she were to cut off her hair, or cut it short ‡, and so wear it in the distinguishing form of the man's.

6 If therefore the woman would throw off the garb, and guise of subjection, by laying aside her veil, even let her clip her hair short, just as the man doth: But if as every one knows, it would be an indecent, bold, and immodest

#### N O T E S.

\* When God is said to be the head of Christ, it relates to office constitution; and we can no more infer from thence, that they are not partakers of the same Divine nature, than that man and woman are not of the same human nature, when the man is said to be the head of the woman: But as there is a difference in order and authority between the man and the woman; so there is between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, in that constitution, by which he, in his office capacity, is both head and Lord of all.

† By the man's and woman's head, that is dishonoured, some understand their own natural heads: But, as it is not easy to conceive, consistent with the force of the apostle's reasoning, how the woman dishonours her own natural head, by laying aside the mark, or

badge of her subjection to the man; so the apostle having in the introduction of his argument, explained the head of the man to signify Christ, and the head of the woman to signify the man, in a political sense, with respect to authority or dominion, it seems every way most agreeable to understand him, as continuing the use of these terms in that explained sense.

‡ It was the custom of those ages for the men to wear their hair exceeding short, hardly lower than the tip of their ears, as appears from the ancient busts, statues, and pictures, that are come to our knowledge; and this is what I take the apostle to mean by women's being shaven or shorn, as a most indecent thing, according to the distinguishing fashion of those days. H 2

if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

immodest thing, contrary to all approved custom, for a woman to appear in public, especially in religious assemblies, polled, or with her hair cut short, in the same distinguishing manner as men's are; let her, for the same reason, keep on her veil, as it becomes the female sex to do, when favoured with divine revelation, as well as at other times.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, so far as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

7 Indeed the man ought not to cover his head with a veil, to denote a subjection that is unsuitable to his sex; because in the dominion, which he is invested with over the creature, he bears the image of God, and is therein to make a sort of honourable representation of that supreme dominion, which God has over all, and which is his glory: But the woman is matter of glory to the man, as he has the honour of a becoming dominion over a creature of such excellent and amiable endowments; and therefore she ought to keep on her veil, in token of it.

8 For the man is not of the woman? but the woman of the man.

8 For, in the first formation of human nature, the man, *Adam*, was not created out of the substance of the woman, he having his existence before her; but his wife, *Eve*, was afterward created out of one of his ribs. (*Gen. ii. 22.*)

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

9 Nor was the man originally created for the sake of the woman, who at that time was not in being; but the woman was created after the man, to be an help-meet and comfort to him; (*Gen. ii. 18.*) which carries an intimation of God's design, that the woman, who was brought last into the world, and formed out of the man for his use, should be in all reasonable subjection to, and not usurp authority over him. (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.)

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head

10 Therefore, (*δια τούτο*) in acts of public worship especially, the woman ought to have a covering on her head, as the known token of her modesty, and of the man's power over her, in deference to the superior authority of those messengers of Christ \*, whom he has sent

#### N O T E.

\* Mr Locke on this verse says, *what the meaning of these words is, I confess I do not understand: And 'tis indeed extremely difficult to determine it.* The generality of expositors refer it, either to the good angels, on account of the reverence due to them, or to evil angels, on account of the danger of temptation to pride and immodesty from them; both these sorts of spirits being supposed to be present in religious assemblies. But as great uncertainty and obscurity attend those conjectures, and as the word (*αγγελος*) rendered *angels*, primarily signifies *messengers*, and is so translated in *Luke vii. 27.* and *ix.*

*52.* and *2 Cor. xii. 7.* and as the ministers of the seven churches in *Asia* are styled *angels*, *Rev. i. 20.* and in several verses of the two following chapters, the first sense given in the paraphrase, appears to me to be most natural, most easily intelligible, and best connected, and of a piece with the rest of the apostle's thread of argument on this head. However I have just touched upon the other two, that the reader may take his choice, in a text so intricate as this, which has been perplexed, instead of cleared, by the many attempts that have been made to explain it. *Vid. Pref. Synop.*

head, because of the angels.

sent to preach the gospel, and preside in church assemblies, that she may not seem to vie with the man, in the authority of teaching. And she ought to be the more careful as to this, in consideration of the supposed presence of both good and bad angels in your Christian assemblies, that she may behave with a becoming reverence to *one*, and may not expose herself to suggestions of pride or immodesty from the other.

11 Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord.

11 But what I have been saying, about the man's dominion over the woman, is not to be construed as tho' he were to be an *absolute* Lord over her, and she his slave, whom he might command and rule, in an imperious, arbitrary and tyrannical manner, according to his own will and pleasure. No; for the man can no more be now without the woman, than the woman without the man; but, in their respective places, they are equally useful and necessary, one to the other and mutually obliged to study and promote each others comfort and advantage; God having, in the wisdom of providence, ordered that it should be so; (*ver* 12) \* and the Lord Christ, who is the head of the man (*ver* 3.) having shewn equally kind regards to both, by making them the subjects of his kingdom, in which there is *neither male nor female; but they are all one in him*, (*Gal.* iii. 28.) with respect to spiritual blessings, without altering the natural and civil duties of the relation in which they before stood to each other.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

12 For as the woman was at first formed out of the man; so likewise all the sons of *Adam*, yea, the whole human race are conceived and brought forth by the woman: and therefore they are now the reciprocal means and instruments of each others being and happiness: But God himself is the first cause and orderer of all, who has made the man to be what he is to the woman, and the woman what she is to the man, that they might discharge their mutual duties, in the most faithful and affectionate manner, one toward the other.

13 Judge ye yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

13 But, to return to my principal argument, I appeal to your own unbiassed judgment and sense of things and would ask you, Is it decent and becoming in a woman, though under inspiration, to behave as if she would invert the natural and established order of God's appointment, by putting off her veil, and so boldly assuming the air of authority, which don't belong to her when

#### N O T E.

\* In the Lord (*εἰς Κύριον*) usually, and I apprehend constantly is, or may be, meant of *Christ*, in the numerous other places of the New Testament, where that phrase occurs;

and therefore I could not think it proper to leave out a reference to him in the paraphrase; especially since he had been mentioned before, (*ver.* 3.) as concerned in this argument.

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

17 Now, in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you

when she takes the liberty of praying in public?

14 Doth not nature itself, which has made a distinction of sexes, and has prompted all civilized nations to preserve an appearance of that distinction, tell you, that, according to the generally established and approved custom of the age, it is an effeminate and degrading thing for a man to wear and dispose his hair in the length, dress, and form of a woman's; so as not to be distinguished from her's? This is very unseemly and unbecoming him.

15 On the contrary, If a woman let her hair grow to its full length, and dress her head with it, according to the common mode of attiring with decency and sobriety, it is an ornament suitable to her sex; and it is to her commendation, that she keeps up the natural sign of her being satisfied with the rank, in which God has placed her: For her hair was given her, by the author of nature, to be such a cloathing for her head, as should be managed in a manner distinctive from the man's that there might be no appearance of confusion, of sexes. This argument, as has been observed, (*ver.* 5, 6.) is equally strong with regard to the veil, or any other mode of dress; that betokens modesty and subjection; and therefore nothing contrary hereunto ought to be suffered, in your religious assemblies.

16 But if, after all that has been urged, there be any of your new teachers, or others among you, that are of a litigious spirit, and disposed to contend for so preposterous a practice; all that I shall further add is that, as such a temper is to be condemned, so no such usage is allowed of by us, the inspired apostles of Christ nor is it to be met with in any of the other New-Testament churches, whether consisting of *Jewish* or *Gentile* converts, which God has made the seat of ordinances, and honours with his presence, that he may be glorified in them; and therefore it is best for you to have nothing to do with it.

17 And (2<sup>d</sup>) while I speak of persons being contentious, this reminds me of some other great mismanagements among you, which are by no means to your honour, or edification: Though I have, with pleasure, commended you for following my instructions in other things; (see the note on *ver.* 2.) yet, as to what I am now going to say, I must, with regret, tell you, that instead of praising, I am constrained to blame and re-

prove

#### N O T E.

\* The promiscuous dress of both sexes was forbidden in the law of *Moses*, *Deut.* xxii. 5. probably to prevent the abuses that might

attend unnatural disguises. See *Ainsworth* on that place; and the *Universal history*, vol. ii. p. 685.

you come together, not for the better, but for the worse.

18 For, first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you: and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you; that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to

prove you, because ye are so very disorderly in your religious meetings, that they turn, not to your spiritual profit, and the glory of Christ; but to your great hurt and the dishonour of his name.

18 For, in the first place, when ye meet together in a church way, for the celebration of sacred ordinances I am informed, (*chap. i. 11.*) that ye fall into parties, and so make schisms among yourselves\*, to the breach of order, peace, and brotherly love; and I have too much reason to credit the reports I have heard of it, at least as to some part of you.

19 For considering the depravity of human nature, and how busy satan and his instruments are to sow tares among the wheat, it is not to be expected, but that as, in the event of things, our Lord himself has foretold us, it must needs be that offences come; (*Matth xviii. 7.*) so there would be, not only factions and schisms among you, but also great corruptions in doctrine and worship, which wicked and designing men would introduce to the subverting of the Christian faith and practice; (*2 Pet. ii. 1.*) God suffering it to be so, in his wise and holy providence, and over-ruling it to this good end, that sincere believers in Christ may be tried, and proved, and shine with the greater lustre, as approved of him; and so be the more evidently distinguished from nominal professors and hypocrites.

20 This factious spirit has introduced another very criminal misdemeanour in the most solemn parts of worship; when we professedly meet together, as New-Testament churches use to do, in one place, for celebrating the Lord's Supper†, which he instituted to be a memorial of his death, the way, in which many of you manage on those occasions, is such, as really is part-

#### N O T E S.

\* It is plain, that by *divisions*, or *schisms*, (*σχίσματα*) the apostle does not mean, any separation from the church, but uncharitable and disorderly divisions in it: For the *Corinthians* continued to be one church; and, notwithstanding all their strifes and disagreements, there was no separation in the external communion of one factious party from another: And it is in this sense of *schisms in the church*, and not of *rending off from it*, that he uses the word, *chap. i. 10.* and *xii. 15.* which are the only places in the New Testament, besides this, where *church schisms* are mentioned. The scripture notion therefore of this sin is a quite different thing, from that orderly separation from corrupted churches, which later ages have stigmatized with hideous outcries, as *schism*; and have made an engine of the greatest cruelties, op-

pressions, and murders, that have troubled the Christian world.

† I see no just reason to suppose, as many do, that the apostle here refers to the *love feasts*: For he mentions only the *Lord's supper*, and all, that he speaks of afterwards, admits of an easy application to their gross irregularities in partaking of that ordinance, while many of those things can admit of no other construction, as may be seen in their places: And, for the cure of their abuses of it, he brings them back to the original institution of the Lord's Supper; (*ver. 23—27.*) and then directs them how to celebrate it in such a manner, as might prevent their so unworthily receiving it. (*ver. 28—34.*) But if, after all, any should think that the apostle meant the *love feasts*, what he here says no great commendation of them.

to eat the Lords supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before either his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

partaking of that divine ordinance, according to the true nature and design of its institution, but is turning it into another sort of festival, than Christ intended.

21 For in your disorderly manner of keeping that spiritual and sacred feast, ye eat and drink, as though it were appointed for the refreshment of the body, rather than of the soul: Instead of the whole church's partaking of one bread, (*chap. x. 16, 17.*) in testimony of their communing together with brotherly love, and of their having joint fellowship with Christ, each party bring their own provision, and eat their own supper, when it is ready for them, before another eats theirs: And instead of taking only a little of the bread and wine, which is enough to answer the end, some of you make a full meal, contrary to the plain design of the institution, which was at the close of the paschal supper, after the hunger of the disciples had been satisfied, by their eating at that festival: (see the note on *Mark xiv. 21.*) And as there is a great difference in worldly circumstances, between some and others among you; so they who, through their poverty, are incapable of providing for themselves, are neglected by the rest and go away as hungry as they came, while the rich bring plentiful entertainments for their own and their friends use, and eat and drink to the full \*, if not to a degree of excess, and that at a time when they ought to be most sober, self-mortified, and serious, and to exercise a compassionate love to Christ's poor, in distributing to their relief.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?

22 What an incongruous, absurd, and scandalous practice is this! if feasting to please and satisfy animal nature be your design, have ye not † families to eat and drink in for this purpose, privately at home? Or do ye think so lightly of the church of God's own institution

#### NOTES.

\* As the word (*μεθύω*) sometimes signifies only to drink so freely as to cheer the spirits, and is rendered *will drink*, (*μεθύσθε*) *John ii. 10.* and is used by the *seventy* much in the same sense, *Gen. xliii. 34.* and *1 Cor. x. 17.* there is no necessity of thinking that any of the *Corinthians* used to make themselves drunk at the Lord's supper but they allowed themselves in too great a liberty of drinking there; and perhaps took encouragement to it, because the *Jews* were wont to do so at the passover, and the heathens at their feasts on their sacrifices; and yet their Christian principles and profession might restrain them from those shameful excesses, which both *Jews* and *Heathens* ran into, on those occasions.

† As in scripture language, nothing is more common than for *houses* to signify fa-

milies, it seems more natural to take *houses* in that sense here, in opposition to *church assemblies*, which had been spoken of just before, *ver. 16—20.* than to understand *houses* in the *literal* sense, in opposition to the *place*, where the church met together: And as the *Christians*, in those days of persecution could have no stated places that were peculiarly set apart for religious worship, but met, as they had opportunity in private houses, I cannot think, with Mr *Joseph Mede*, (*Vol. I. p. 405, &c.*) that the *place* they met in is here called the *church of God*, so evidently contrary to the use of this phrase in this epistle, *chap. i. 2. x. 31.* and *xv. 9.* and in all other parts of the New Testament. See Dr *Chauncy's Ecclesia Enucleata*, p. 14—41.

in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

stitution, for the celebration of divine ordinances in their solemn assemblies, as if common and sacred things were to be blended together in its administrations, and its poor members were to be thought beneath your notice, though they are as dear to Christ, and cost him as much to redeem, and have as much right to this holy ordinance, as the rich? And are ye minded to expose and discourage, and to pour contempt and scorn upon such members of the church, as have no provisions of their own nor are admitted to partake of yours? What shall I say to such an extreme disorder and corruption among you, as this? Shall I commend you for it, as I did for your following my orders in other things? (*ver. 2.*) No, by no means; in this particular I cannot do it, but must faithfully reprove you; since herein ye have instead of keeping, notoriously departed from, what I delivered to you about this very ordinance.

23 For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread;

23 For though I was not present when our blessed Lord instituted this holy supper, and celebrated it with his disciples; (*Matth xxvi. 26, &c.*) yet *that*, which I have received concerning it, by immediate revelation from Jesus Christ himself; (*Gal. i. 12.*) and *that*, which I accordingly communicated and recommended to you, for your religious observation, when I preached the gospel among you, and brought you into a church state, (*chap. iii. 6. and Acts xviii. 7—11.*) was this, that as the Lord Jesus is the great head and king of the church, and only has a right to institute divine ordinances, and demand our obedience; so in the very night, on which Judas perfidiously betrayed him into the bands of his enemies, in order to his being crucified, he took a loaf or cake of bread into his hands, at the close of the paschal supper, to intimate that he was going to set it apart to some further sacred use: He did this, I say, the very same night, that he might seal his Testament, just before he died, for the confirmation of our faith; that he might shew how willing he was to undergo, and keep in view, the extremest of his sufferings in his near approaching death, and might testify the greatness and constancy of his endearing love to the church, in providing for their comfort, even while he was going, in the most terrible manner, to bear their sins and sorrows; and that he might the better engage their love to him, and their after notice of, and value for this affecting ordinance, as the token of a dying friend.

24 And, when he had given thanks;

24 And when he had prayed over the bread for a blessing upon it, with thanksgiving to God for the riches

thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

es of his love and grace, and so set it apart for the intended holy use; he then brake it into several pieces, for each of his disciples to eat of it; and, at his delivering it out, he said to them, *take and eat*, thereby intimating that it was designed, and given for their spiritual benefit, and that they ought to receive and feed upon him by faith, which was signified by those actions: and further to explain his meaning, he added, this broken bread, which I have now separated to sacramental use \*, is the symbol and representation of my body, which is just now to be crucified, pierced, and wounded for your iniquities, as suffering in your room and stead: 'Take then and eat of this symbolical bread, in a believing, humble, joyful, thankful, and obediential remembrance of my dying love; of the extremity of my suffering on your behalf; of the deliverances and blessings, which I have thereby procured for you; and of the obligations to love and duty, which I have thereby laid upon you.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it

25 In like manner he took the sacramental cup into his hands, after he and his disciples had eat of the bread; and then, having also set that apart by prayer, (*Mark xiv. 23.*) he said to them, the wine in this cup signifies and represents, and is to be the standing memorial, by my institution, of the blood which I shed, with agony in my soul, for the confirmation of the covenant of grace, and the purchasing of all the good things contained in it; which covenant, as all it's promised blessings depend upon, and are to be enjoyed by virtue, and in consequence of my death, may be called the New Testament put in force by it: *Drink † ye all of this*

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\* That the pronouncing of these words, *This is my body*, is not the form of consecration, as the *Papists* pretend, is evident: because Christ bid his disciples *take and eat*, before he pronounced those words; but it is very absurd to suppose, that he should order them to take and eat the bread, before it was consecrated. Besides, the words of consecration or blessing, that are pronounced by the minister, must be spoken to *God*, in a way of prayer, that he would make the bread to be that to us, for which he has appointed it; but *this is my body*, is spoken to the people, and not to God, and therefore cannot be the words of consecration; they only assert what the bread by blessing it, or setting it apart, is made to be namely, a sign, representation, and memorial of the broken body of Christ and not his very body itself. See the note on *Matth. xxvi.* and *28.* and *Luke xxii. 20.*

† Our Lord, at the close of the paschal supper, commanded, that all his disciples, under the notion of his church and family, should celebrate this ordinance, (*Matth. xxvi. 27.*) as a sign and memorial of their deliverance from sin and wrath by his sufferings and death, in like manner as *Israel* kept the passover, in token and commemoration of their deliverance from the destroying angel, and from their *Egyptian* bondage, (*Exod. xii. 26, 27.* and *Deut. xvi. 2, 3.*) This shews that the Lord's Supper was instituted in the room of the passover. And as he expressly ordered, that all his disciples should drink of the cup, which is more than he said, though not more than he intended, of eating the bread; and which the apostle here interprets with a reference to the whole body of the church at *Corinth*: This evidently shews how unreasonably and sacrilegiously the *Papists* deprive the people of the cup, directly contra-



is, in remembrance of me.

this cup, (*Matt. xvi. 27.*) with this religious sense of it's meaning, very frequently, as often as ye have opportunity for it, in a fiducial, affectionate, penitential, grateful, and self-dedicating remembrance of me, and of my bleeding love to you, and of the soul sufferings especially, which I underwent for the redemption of your souls, as your substitute and ransom.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lords death till he come.

26 This holy institution answers a most important end: For as often as ye eat of this appointed bread, which is, in it's own nature, bread still, though signifying Christ's body; and as often as ye drink of the instituted cup, the contents of which are wine still, tho' significative of his blood, which is *shed for many, for the remission of sins*; (*Matth. xvi. 28.*) ye thereby, as in duty bound, do publicly declare, and openly avow to God, to your own consciences, and to all the world, the death of your Lord and Saviour, as that which ye depend upon alone for pardon and reconciliation, and for a gracious performance of all the promises of the new covenant, unto complete salvation; and ye thereby visibly do †, and sincerely ought to publish to all around you, that ye are not ashamed of, but glory in a crucified Jesus, how much soever *Jews or Heathens*, or any sort of unbelievers may despise him: And this ye, as a church of Christ, are to continue to do, with frequency, all the days of your lives, as every church, not only in this, but in all succeeding ages, is likewise obliged to do, till he shall come again; and receive them to himself; or shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation. (*John xiv. 3. Heb. ix. 28.*)

27 Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body

27 This is the plain institution of Christ, the end of which I have set before you; and therefore whoever, contrary to it's nature and design, shall in an ignorant and irreverent, factious and uncharitable, carnal and sensual manner ‡, eat of this symbolical bread, and drink of this symbolical cup of the Lord Jesus, which he appointed to be taken and eaten and drank, in remembrance

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27 to the most special command of Christ, that all the communicants should drink of it, as all the disciples, then present, did; and that in the same character of discipleship, in which they had eat of the bread, *Mark xiv. 22, 23.*

† The verb (*ἀναστήτε*) here rendered indicatively *ye do shew*, is also imperative, and signifies *shew ye*; accordingly the turn of the paraphrase takes in both senses.

‡ *Eating and drinking unworthily* relates not so the unworthiness of persons that come to the Lord's supper, but to their unworthy

manner of receiving it; and has a plain reference to the uncharitable and scandalous mismanagement of the *Corinthians* at that ordinance, which the apostle had been censuring; *ver. 18.—21.* This therefore ought to be no discouragement to humble souls, as it too often is, that sincerely desire to partake of it, in a holy manner, and to right ends, according to the institution of Christ; but should excite their serious concern to celebrate this, as they also ought every other ordinance, with a religious regard to its spiritual design.

dy and blood of  
the Lord.

28 But let a  
man examine  
himself, and so  
let him eat of that  
bread and drink  
of that cup.

29 For he that  
eateth and drink-  
eth unworthily,  
eateth and drink-  
eth damnation to  
himself, not dis-  
cerning the Lords  
body.

30 For this  
cause many are  
weak

membrance of his sufferings in body and soul, will incur the guilt of prophaning this sacred ordinance, and of contemptuously treating the sin-bearing body, and the atoning blood of the Lord of glory, as though his death were not a propitiatory sacrifice worth remembering; but were a common un sanctified thing, like the death of other men.

28 But, in order to the preventing of such hainous guilt, let every one, who would partake of this holy ordinance, go into a close examination of his state before God; of his faith, love, and evangelical repentance; of the frame of his heart, and course of his life; and of his knowledge and sense of the spiritual signification and ends of this solemn institution; let him see to it, that they be agreeable to what ought to be found in a sincere communicant; and with these serious enquiries, and gracious exercises of soul, let him eat of the sacramental bread, and drink of the sacramental cup.

29 For he who, being negligent of all this, eats and drinks at the Lord's Supper, with an unfriendly, contentious, party spirit, or with carnal principles and views, such as have been already taken notice of, (*ver.* 18—22.) or doth it without a religious, reverent regard to the true nature and intention of Christ's appointment therein, eats and drinks not to his own edification and advantage, but to the exposing of himself to some severe temporal judgments in this life \*, as tokens of God's righteous resentment against him, for not considering the death of Christ, with a religious regard to it, as represented in that ordinance; not making a difference (*μεταστάσις*) between those sacred symbols of the Lord's Body and blood for spiritual purposes, and common food for the refreshment of animal nature.

30 It is on account of those shameful disorders, in temper and practice, which have been found among you, that the hand of God already lies so heavy upon you †. From hence it is, that many of you are now, by his

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\* The word (*κρίμα*) translated *damnation*, properly and primarily signifies *judgment*, and is used for *temporal judgment*, in 1 Pet. iv. 17. and often by the *seventy*, as in *Deut.* xxxii. 41. and *Ezek.* v. 8, 10, 15. and is evidently to be thus understood here, and not of *eternal damnation*, as many honestly and truly gracious souls have taken it, to the terrifying of their spirits, and discouraging their approaches to the Lord's table: For the apostle explains his meaning in the next verse, where he instances in *temporal judgments*, which had befallen many of the *Corinthians*,

for their abuses of that sacred ordinance; and tells them, *ver.* 32. that *when they were thus judged, they were chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world*: This opposes *judgment* to *final condemnation*; and intimates that some of them, at least, who were visited with those temporal judgments, were the children of God, and would be eternally saved.

† It is not improbable but that, as some have apprehended, *Corinth* was then visited with an epidemical and mortal disease; and that the apostle might know, by immediate

weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32 But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the

his awful judgments, in a weak, sickly, and dangerous state of health; and many others have been cut off by \* death: Take heed therefore, lest, for the like cause, God should come out, in still further ways of righteousness, against you.

31 For were we seriously, strictly, and conscientiously to search into our own conduct in this, and all other cases, by comparing it with the word of God; and were we thereupon to pass sentence upon, and condemn ourselves for what is amiss in us, and with penitent hearts to correct it, we should escape God's severe rebukes, in the way of his holy providence, for our defaults.

32 But when any of us, who are true believers, are in this, or any other way, afflicted by terrible things in righteousness, we are therein wisely and mercifully chastised of the Lord, in a fatherly manner, to the end that we might be brought to repentance, and not suffered to go securely on, uncorrected and unreclaimed, in such ways of sinning, as would be inconsistent with a state of grace and favour with God! and so might not be cast in judgment, at the great day, with the unbelieving and ungodly world.

33 Therefore, my dear brethren in Christ, take heed of all those provoking abuses of this holy ordinance, which have been so notorious among you; and, when ye assemble for partaking of the Lord's supper, stay for one another, that ye may communicate together at the same table; and at the same time; and so may have a truly Christian fellowship and communication with the Lord Jesus, and with one another, like brethren of the same family, and children of the same heavenly Father, according to the real intent of the ordinance itself.

34 And as to the ordinary and needful refreshments of the body; if any of you are hungry, let such an one satisfy his craving appetite at home; and not think to do it at the Lord's table, which was never appointed for such purposes; that ye may not meet together for the worse, (*ver. 17.*) even to the aggravating of your guilt, and provoking God to punish you in the way of his dreadful judgment, (*εἰς κρίμα*) for your perverting the design

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revelation, that the sins of God's people here, particularly in their horrid profanations of the Lord's supper, greatly contributed to the bringing down of that judgment upon them, and upon their city.

\* *Sleep* is a common word in scripture, to signify the death of men, whilst it is most

frequently used with relation to the death of the  *saints*, because there is to be a rising, or awaking from the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Dan. xii. 2. But *brutes* that die, but never said to *sleep*, because they will never rise again.

the rest will I set in order when I come.

sign of so solemn an ordinance, and celebrating it in an unbecoming and uncharitable, carnal and factious manner. And as to other irregularities, of what nature soever, which are among you, and have been mentioned to me, I shall defer the consideration of them, till, by the will of God, I may have opportunity of making you another visit; when I hope, by his guidance and blessing, to set them all to rights.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Where can we find an example without defect, or an authority without restriction, but in Christ! The best, even of inspired men, are to be imitated no further than they follow HIM; nor are any commands binding upon conscience, further than they are HIS: But it is matter of high commendation, to remember all that is good in his servants; and to observe those ordinances and commandments, which they deliver from the Lord Jesus. How contrary is it to the design of the inspiration itself, to subvert the natural order of things, which God himself has established! He has made man to be the Head of the woman, in some degree of dominion, as Christ, in his office-capacity, is the head of the man, and God the Father is the head of Christ. How unseemly and dishonourable then is it, for the human sexes to change the ranks of superiority and inferiority, which God has ordered for them, and the tokens of which are to be preserved by such distinguishing dress, as nature, and the allowed customs of the age direct to! But yet, as God has made the man and woman reciprocally useful and necessary one to the other, and the wife is to behave with modesty and subjection, in all lawful things to her husband; so he should treat her with the utmost gentleness and affection.—How blame-worthy, and injurious to the interest and credit of religion, is it, for the members of churches to fall into a contentious, factious, and uncharitable temper and behaviour towards one another; and that about practices which are contrary to the laudable custom of other churches! And how melancholy is it to think of the heresies in doctrines, that will unavoidably rise in the church, through the subtilty of Satan, and the corruption of mankind! But, blessed be God, that he over-rules all, to the greater improvement of true believers, and to the more eminently distinguishing them from false professors.—What a gracious institution is the Lord's supper, whose authority and love have bound the frequent celebration of it upon the consciences of all his disciples, whether weaker or stronger believers, till he shall come again to judgment! But how careful should we be to observe this, together with every other ordinance, just as he has left it; and that in a solemn manner, suitable to its spiritual nature and design, as a memorial of his body, which was broken, and of his blood, which was shed for us; and not with carnal principles and views, which make it quite another thing! How senseless, and contrary to sacramental language, is it, to suppose that the substance of the bread, after it is set apart for sacred use, is turned into the very body and blood of Christ! It is bread still as much as ever. And yet how concerned should we be to partake of it with reverence, and with an exercise of suitable graces, that we may not eat and drink unworthily! In order hereunto, every one should examine himself, as to his apprehensions about the obligations and meaning of this ordinance, and his right to partake of it; and when he has good hope, through grace, that he is a true believer, and sincerely desires and aims at the honour of Christ, and his own edification in receiving it, he ought humbly, thankfully, and cheerfully, to approach the table of the Lord; and not be kept back by terrifying fears of a damnation, which the apostle never meant, and which such a soul is in no danger of; nor by fears of such temporal judgments in this life, as came upon the Corinthians, for their scandalous profanations of the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ. But whenever God corrects any of us for our iniquities; how happy is it, if we are only chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemn-

ed with the world ! Alas ! How many things are there out of order in true believers, and in the churches of Christ themselves ? and, what need is there of divine direction and influence, to reduce them all to a regular state, as becomes the gospel !

## C H A P. XII.

*As the Corinthian church was greatly enriched with spiritual gifts, and turned them into occasions of strife and envy, the apostle considers their original as from God, and their variety and use for the propagation of the gospel, and edification of the church, 1,—11. Illustrates this by an allusion to the human body, in which every member has its place and use, for the good of the whole, 12,—26. Applies it to the church of Christ, which is his body, and to the gifts of every particular member, which are to be exercised for the advantage of all the rest, 27,—30. And closes with an exhortation to seek after something still more excellent, 31.*

## TEXT.

NOW concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW, having offered what may be sufficient about the disorders, that have been found in your worship, (*chap. xi.*) I would add some thoughts about those supernatural qualifications, endowments, and powers which, though not in themselves of a saving nature, may be called *spiritual gifts*; because they proceed from the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, are chiefly seated in the soul, and relate to spiritual things. In these some of you greatly excel; (*chap. i. 5, 7. and xiv. 12.*) but are too apt to pride yourselves, and turn them into occasions of strife, envy, and vainglory: With respect then to these \*, and the persons endowed with them, I would fain have you understand and consider my Christian brethren of whom ye have received them what their true nature and design is; and how they ought to be used and exercised.

2 As to their *original*, Ye can't but know, and ye ought seriously to reflect upon it, to keep you humble before God, and to engage you into a holy and diligent improvement of them for his glory, that most of you were sinners of the *Gentiles*, and lately were in a state of deplorable darkness and idolatry, in which ye were drawn, and even hurried away (*απαγομενοι*) to the worshipping of false Gods, and their images, such as stocks and stones, and the works of men's hands which whatever their devotees pretend, about the answers given by their oracles, are justly styled senseless, *dumb* idols

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols

## NOTE.

\* The word (*πνευματικά*) rendered *spiritual gifts*, being both masculine and neuter, may relate to persons as well as things.

idols, even as ye were led.

idols, (*Habak. ii. 18.*) that can neither speak, nor hear, nor do any thing for their worshippers; (*Psal. cxv. 4—8.*) much less can they confer such excellent gifts upon them, as ye are now favoured with: To these ye paid your religious homage, even as ye were induced to it; by the natural blindness and depravity of your own minds by the example of others, and the artifices of your pagan priests, who were then your leaders, and by diabolical impostures, that had nothing of the divine spirit in them, by whom ye are now turned from those idols to God, and are so richly adorned with his supernatural gifts.

3 Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost.

3 Therefore, to excite your gratitude and praise to the author of the happy change, that is made upon you; and at the same time, to give you a general and certain rule, whereby ye may distinguish the gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit, from all delusions, such as the exorcisms of the *Jews*\*, and the pretended inspirations of the heathens; as also to prevent envy, strife and prejudices among you, I judge it needful to inform you, that no one whatsoever, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*, who thinks or speaks, under the light and influence of the of the spirit of God, can reject our divine Lord and Saviour, and talk of him, as though he were an impostor, abandoned of God; or can designedly detract, in any respect from his glory: much less can such an one work any real miracle to confirm those blasphemous *Anathemas*; it being directly inconsistent with the design of the Holy Ghost, and of all his operations, to inspire with any sentiments, or communicate any powers, that are opposite to, or derogatory from the honour and dignity of the blessed Jesus: And, on the other hand, no man can, from his very heart, acknowledge Christ's authority; speak honourably of him, as God; and profess, own, and preach him, as the only Lord and Saviour, whom he reverences, loves, adores, and serves, and on whom he intirely depends for all salvation; much less can he perform any miracle, to confirm the truth of this profession of his faith in him, but by the illumination and operation of the Holy Spirit, who comes into our world on purpose to glorify Christ by

#### N O T E.

\* The *Jewish* nation denied that the Holy Ghost was given to the *Gentiles*, or dwelt upon any out of the land of *Israel*; and their *Exorcists* were enemies to Christ, and pretended to be themselves endued with the Holy Ghost. (See Dr *Lightfoot's Hebrew and Talmudical exercises*, vol. ii. p. 750.) What the apostle therefore says in this verse, seems

designed to confute the vain boasts of the *Exorcists*; and to take off the prejudices of the believing *Jews* against the *Gentile* converts: And yet, as some of the *Heathens* pretended to inspirations, I do not see why we may not suppose, that he intended to distinguish the operations of the spirit from those delusions also.

by taking of his things, and shewing them to us. (*John xvi. 14.*)

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit.

4 Now, to direct the use of your spiritual endowments, as well as lead you back to their original, it is proper for you to consider, that there is a great variety in the kinds and degrees of those gifts, which are conferred upon believers, and upon ministering servants; some being of one sort, and others of another; some suited to one particular end, and others to another, and some more eminent and excellent than others: But, of what nature or degree soever they be, none of them proceed from different spirits, but all from one and the same divine spirit, who alone bestows them, and enables any person to exercise either of them.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

5 There is also a variety of offices, services, or ministries (*ministerium*) in the church, some of which are superior to others: (*ver. 28, &c.*) But it is one and the same Lord Jesus, who has instituted them, and has qualified and commissioned his servants to fulfil them; (*Eph. iv. 11, 12*) and who appoints and calls some to one kind of service, and others to another, when and where he pleases; and they all therein act under his authority, and by his influence, who is their Head, Lord and King, and therein minister to him.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

6 And there are divers miraculous works, powerfully performed in the discharge of these offices; (*ver. 5.*) and by virtue of these gifts, (*ver. 4.*) some in one way, and others in another: But all are owing to, and derived from one and the same God even the Father who mightily and effectually works by, and together with his Son and Spirit, as the original cause and producer both of all the abilities, that any persons receive for them, and of all the good effects that are wrought upon others by them.

7 But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

7 But that none may abuse any of these spiritual gifts and offices, in the exercise of them, it is to be considered, that all these evident discoveries and demonstrations of the peculiar presence, light, and power of the Holy Spirit, in which God the Father, and our Lord Jesus, act by, and together with him, (*ver. 5, 6.*) are designed, and granted to those, that are favoured with them, not for their own private advantage, honour, and applause, much less to swell their own pride, and disdain of others, or to occasion strife and envy; but they are given to every one that has them, for the same general ends and purposes, even for the instruction, edification, and confirmation of the church; and so for the common benefit of the whole mystical body of Christ. (*ver. 12, 13.*)

8 For to one is given, by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit;

8 For, to instance in some of the principal of these spiritual endowments, to one person is freely given by, the immediate agency of the spirit of truth and grace, a clear understanding of the great doctrines of the gospel, and an ability to preach and apply them, with judgment and propriety, in the whole compass of them, according to New Testament revelation of their glorious system, for making others wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ: To another is given, by the light and influence of the same divine spirit, a deep insight into the Old Testament types and prophecies concerning Christ, and the important things of the gospel, as they are contained in the law and the prophets\*; and an ability of explaining them to others, and shewing how they are accomplished under the New Testament state:

9 To another faith by the same spirit: to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit;

9 To another is given, by the same Holy Spirit, a full assent to the truth of the gospel, and boldness in preaching it, together with a firm trust in Christ for all divine assistance†, that shall be needful in every dangerous and difficult service, to which he may be called: To another is communicated the gift of healing all manner of bodily diseases, in an instant, without the use of ordinary means, for confirmation of the gospel, by the same good spirit:

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to

10 To another is given a power of working other miracles of all sorts, as there may be occasion for them to answer the like purposes; such as inflicting immediate and visible punishments on notorious offenders, as in the case of *Ananias and Sapphira*, and *Elymas the sorcerer*; (*Acts* v. 5, 10. and xiii. 11.) raising the dead; (*Acts* viii. 40.) and conveying the spirit by laying on of hands (*Acts* viii. 17.) to another is granted the gift of prophecy‡, for the

#### N O T E S.

\* The word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, intimate not only an acquaintance with the things meant thereby; but also an ability to discover them to others; and as the gospel of Christ, or Christ as revealed in the gospel, is called wisdom, the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of God in a mystery, in this epistle, chap. i. 24. and ii. 6, 7. and the manifold wisdom of God, (Eph. iii. 10.) and as knowledge, which may be supposed to be taught by the Holy Ghost, in a way of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, (chap. ii. 13) is mentioned here as a distinct gift from that of wisdom, and from that of prophecy, ver. 10. and from those of revelation and prophecy, chap. xiv. 6. the distinction, given between all these in the Paraphrase, seems as probable, as any, that has fallen under my observation. See *Miscell. Sacr.* Vol. i. p. 41, &c. and *De iſtibi* on this place.

† Faith is here ranked among the extraordinary gifts of the spirit; but to understand it of the faith of miracles, as is commonly done, is, I think, to make it too coincident with the two next mentioned gifts; the faith of miracles being, in effect, the same thing with the gift of healing, and the working of miracles: And therefore I have considered all these expressions in such senses, as may best preserve a difference between them; and yet have given such a view of faith, as may be ranked among the extraordinary gifts of the spirit.

‡ I rather choose to restrain prophecy in this place to the natural and strict acceptation of the word, and that with relation to a lower sort of prophets, such as *Agabus*, who prophesied of the famine at *Jerusalem*, and of *Paul's* being bound there, *Acts* xi. 27, 28. and xxi. 10, 11. than to take



to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

the foretelling of some particular events, which, when they come to pass, are likewise a further confirmation of the gospel: To another is given a power of discovering what spirit men are acted by, whether of God, or of the devil, or of their own warm imagination; and so, whether they are true, or false prophets; (*chap. xiv. 9.*) as also of discerning men's tempers, designs and qualifications; (*Acts v. 3, 9. and xiv. 9.*) and knowing, by immediate suggestion of the Holy Ghost, who are, or are not, fit to be employed in any public affairs of the church: (*Acts xii. 2, 3.*) to another is given a faculty of speaking any foreign language, immediately and fluently, for propagating the gospel among strangers of different nations: (*Acts ii. 8, &c.*) To another is given a great readiness of interpreting, with propriety and exactness, what is said in those languages, to such as mingle in the congregation, and don't understand them (*ver. 30. and chap. xiv. 13, 27.*)

¶ But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

II But whatever variety there is in these gifts and powers; on whomsoever they are bestowed, in greater or lesser degrees, or in different kinds; and to whatever noble purposes they are fitted, designed, and applied, they are all evidently divine; and, in opposition to the multitude and diversity of the gifts themselves, they are all wrought by that one and the self-same blessed Spirit, whom I have been speaking of, and who therein operates as a divine person, distributing them in all their sorts and measures to every one, that has any thing of them respectively, as his own things, (*ver. 12.*) which he has full power to bestow severally, just as he pleases, and as his own act and deed; not by constraint or necessity, but freely, according to his own will and pleasure, who works as a free agent, in all that he doth; with the same sovereignty, that is the peculiar prerogative of God himself, (*ver. 18. and Heb. ii. 4.*) with whom it is lawful to do what he will with his own (*Matth. xx. 13.*) And the Spirit doth all this for the benefit of the church, as was said *ver. 7.*

12 For

#### N O T E S.

take it, in the laxer sense, to signify preaching, or explaining texts of scripture by an immediate illumination of the spirit, as it is to be understood in *chap. xiv. 5.* because this would too much fall in with either the word of wisdom, or with the word of knowledge, mentioned before, *ver. 8.*

¶ The same sort of powerful operation or energy, and the same freedom and sovereignty, in distributing all these gifts, are here ascribed to the Spirit, (*εἰς τὴν ἐκδοὺς δωρεὰς*) as are ascribed to God, *ver. 6. and 18.* (*ἐν τῷ ἐκδοὺς; ἡ ἐκδοὺς*) and so are plain at-

testations to the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit: And their being all ascribed (*ver. 4. 5. 9.*) to the Father, Son, and Spirit distinctly, in an equal manner, naturally leads us to conceive of the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, as three adorable persons in the one undivided Godhead; and as exerting one and the same energy, and so being, in nature and operation, one and the same God. See my discourse on this text, intitled, *The Holy Spirit a distinct person*, pag. 6, &c.

11 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

12 For as the natural body of a man is one animal fabrick, enlivened and actuated by one soul, and consists of many members, which have their several functions, in their respective places, for the advantage of the whole; but (2<sup>d</sup>) all the members of that one body, though composed of ever so many parts, constitute only one human body; so likewise it is with regard to Christ mystical \*, even his church, which is vitally united to him, as members to their head; and is animated by one and the same spirit, that resides without measure in him, (*chap. vi. 17. and John iii. 34.*) and is communicated, *according to the measure of his gift*, to them: (*Eph. iv. 7.*) and this spiritual body is composed of many members, each of which has its particular place and office, for the edification of the whole; but be they ever so many, and their gifts and uses ever so various, they all together make up but one complete church, or body of Christ.

13 For as one spirit, are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bound or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.

13 For all of us, who are endued with the gifts and graces of one and the self-same spirit, (*ver. 11.*) are thereby incorporated into one spiritual body, according to what was signified by our being baptized with water, and *that* without any preference of one to another, whether we be *Jewish*, or *Gentile* believers; and whatever our civil station be in the world, whether that of masters, or servants, and bondslaves: For we are *all one in Christ Jesus*, alike entitled to all the privileges and benefits of his church, as *Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* (*Gal. iii. 28, 29.*) and we have all been nourished and refreshed by further participations of that one divine spirit, who invigorates, strengthens, and comforts us, and causes us to be of one heart and soul, in things pertaining to God, according to what is signified by our visible communion with Christ, and  
with

#### N O T E.

\* *Christ mystical*, as I understand the meaning of that expression, which is so commonly used in this case, is opposed to Christ *literally, personally, and corporally* considered and, most strictly speaking, signifies all his members, as united together in faith and love by his Spirit, under him, and by virtue of their union to him, as their head; but, in a looser sense, may be taken for all those that are visibly united to him: So that every one of them is, as it were, in one or other of these considerations of them a part of Christ: and all together are the *subject of his will*. *He is all*, (*Eph. i. 23.*) and who said to Saul, when persecuting his members, *Why persecutest thou me?* (*Acts ix. 4.*) In this sense the church is not many bodies, but one body in Christ, all its members, taken

together, make but one universal or catholic church under him, as their head, tho' formed into many particular churches for the celebration of sacred ordinances, and making a regular solemn profession of his name. And all those among them, that are not in sincerity and truth what they are in name and profession, as Christians, are only external and visible members of this one body, while the limbs that have the dead palsy, or like a blind eye, or deaf ear, parts of the body which the apostle instances in, *ver. 16* they have no vital and beneficial union and communion with the head, nor with the other members, that are internally and effectually cemented together, and partakers of spiritual life and vigour from Christ, the head.

13 For the body is not one member, but many.

14 If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

15 And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

17 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

with each other, as one body, in our drinking of the cup of blessing at the Lord's Supper (*Chap. x. 16, 17.*)

14 For as the natural, so the mystical, or spiritual body, do not consist of one single member; but of many, some of superior, and others of inferior use and excellence; and none of them are unnecessary, but all conducive to the perfection and beauty of the whole.

15 To illustrate this by a few plain instances, relating to the natural body, if the foot (supposing it were capable of speaking) should say, because I am not the hand, and so can't work as that doth, I am no part of the body, nor of any use to it: would it be reasonable to conclude from thence, that it is no member of, nor any way useful to the body? It certainly is, for all that, and is necessary to its standing and walking.

16 And if the ear should say, because I am not the eye, and have no faculty for seeing, I am no part of the body, nor at all useful to it; could any one think that therefore it is not a member of the body, nor of any advantage to it? There is no room for such a thought; since, for all that, the ear is of vast service by its hearing: So it is with respect to the spiritual body of Christ, in which its members of lower gifts and graces are as truly of the body; and as needful to it, in their respective stations, as those of superior offices and attainments, for serving the purposes of his glory, and the good of the whole church.

17 If, on one hand, all the human body were nothing but an eye, what would become of the sense of hearing? If, on the contrary, the whole body were all ear, formed only for hearing, what would become of the rest of its senses, as particularly of its power of smelling, as well as of seeing? So if, in the church of Christ, all its members had only one sort of gifts, or graces, though ever so excellent, where would be the beauty, pleasure, and advantage of its rich variety, which is as necessary to the perfection of the church, as all the organs and senses are to that of the human body? All this would be lost, to the detriment of the whole.

18 But as in the natural, so in the spiritual body, God has, in fact, set and ranged every member in its proper place and order, with such powers, and for such uses and services, as in his infinite wisdom and good pleasure, he saw fittest and best, that each of them might subserve, and be employed for the benefit of the whole, with a suitable variety of spiritual qualifications and offices, that are needful for it.

19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more

19 And if, in either of these sorts of bodies, there were only one member for one particular use, how could it, in the first case, be a proper human body; Or, in the second, an organical and integral, or complete body, composed of several parts like that of the church? The very notion of such a body supposes it to be made up of many members, every one of which has its special use and function, for which it was formed, furnished, and placed in the body of Christ.

20 But now, as God has ordered both these structures, according to the counsel of his own will; the members, in each of them, are very many and various, for serving their several important purposes; and yet all together constitute but one body, according to their respective natures, for the good of which, every one of them, as in a well organized body, ought to contribute its part, *as of the ability which God gives, that he in all things, relating to the spiritual body, may be glorified through Jesus Christ.* (1 Pet. iv. 11.)

21 And they have such a mutual dependence upon, and relation to one another, that as, in the natural body, the eye, which is the organ of sight, cannot say to the hand, which is the instrument of work and labour, I have no occasion for you, but can do as well without you: No, nor can the head, that highest and noblest part of the body, which is the seat of contrivance and direction, say to the feet, which are the lowest part, but support and carry about the whole human frame, I stand in no need of you: So, in the mystical body, they that have the most excellent gifts and qualifications, and the highest stations in the church, such as may give them the denomination of a ministerial eye\*, and subordinate head, while considered as a part of the body in distinction from Christ, who is equally and only the proper head of the whole, ought not to despise the meanest of its members, as though they were insignificant and useless.

22 Nay, to carry this comparison still farther, those parts of the body, that seem to be of the more weak and tender frame, such as the organs of digestion, nourishment, and circulation of the blood and spirits, and the like

#### N O T E.

\* Christ is the only proper, vital, influential, and authoritative head of the church; as such he is frequently spoken of in scripture; and no man ought any more to be called the head, than his master, in any such sense. But as the apostle, all along in this context, speaks of the church, as the body of Christ, in allusion to the complete natural

body, all the members of which have need of one another; So the head, that cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you, is to be considered merely as a ministerial head, and so a part of the body itself, in distinction from Christ, as the supreme head, who animates, and rules the whole.

more feeble, are necessary.

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

like, are absolutely necessary to the subsistence, life, and vigour of the human body; yea, and more so, than the largest of its limbs.

23 And even as to those parts of the body, which, in the present fallen state of human nature, we account to be not so graceful, nor so fit to be exposed to open view, as the rest, we take the more special care to put a decent cloathing upon them; and those very parts, which modesty requires to be concealed, have an artificial beauty put upon them; and, in that sense, may be said to have a more honourable respect paid them, than others that are left uncovered: So, in the present imperfect state of the body or church of Christ, we should be ready to cast a mantle of love over the *infirmities* of its least graceful members; and to make the best of them, instead of exposing them to contempt and reproach, or disdaining and rejecting them, as useless.

24 For as in the human body, its comelier parts, such as the face and hand, which may be seen in their native beauty, need no artificial covering, either to adorn, or conceal them; but, this not being the case with all its members, God in his Providence has contrived a proper proportion of honour, as well as service, in the whole frame of the body, according to the state and situation of each of its parts; and has given intimations to mankind, to supply the lack of natural decency, by putting an ornamental concealment upon those, that needed such borrowed embellishments: So, in the spiritual body, the most eminent and shining Christians, and servants of our Lord, easily approve themselves to the consciences of their fellow members; but it is the will of God, that those who, though real believers and faithful ministers, need more favourable allowances, should be treated with the greater tenderness and kind regard, in condescension to their weaknesses and infirmities; and that they should be assisted and encouraged in every thing that is good; and esteemed for such services, as they may be capable of.

25 God, in his infinite wisdom, has adjusted things after this manner, both in the natural and spiritual body, to the end that, in one, and the other, there might be no (*σχίσμα*) breach, disharmony, or alienation of affection, or disrespect to any fellow member; but that all the members of the body might have a like solicitous concern, and natural care of the welfare one of another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

26 Finally, such is their intimate union, and mutual sympathy with each other, whether it be in a way of grief, or of pleasure, that if one member suffers pain, or injury, all the rest of the members are afflicted with it, and ready to do what in them lies for its relief; or if one member be easy, prosperous, and comfortable, or honours of any kind be conferred upon it, all the rest are partakers of the pleasure and advantage with it and have an honour redounding to themselves by it.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

27 Now, to apply all this to the case in hand, Ye, my brethren, considered under the notion of a church, formed according to the order of the gospel, stand in communion with one another, and with all other true churches of Christ, and together with them make up the catholic visible church, of which he is the head; (*Eph. iv. 15, 16. and Col. i. 24.*) and each of you are particular members one with another and so a part (~~see~~ see the note on *Rom. xi. 25.*) of that spiritual and holy body: (*Eph. v. 30.*) And therefore every one of you ought to employ the gifts and graces, that God has furnished you with, for the edification of the whole according to your different ranks and qualifications; and ye are all to sympathize and share with one another, both in prosperity and adversity; as also in the honour that is put upon some, and in the neglect and contempt that is shewn to others; so as to *rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* (*Rom. xii. 15.*)

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing; helps, gov-

28 And in the external administration of the affairs of the church, for the advantage of the whole, God in these days of its first erection has appointed, gifted and placed various officers, some more general, and others more special, in it; much after the manner, as proper officers, over provinces, and particular cities, or corporations, are established by the authority of a temporal sovereign in his kingdom: As, to specify them, he has thus set in the church, *first* of all, apostles, who received their commission immediately from Christ himself, as the prime ministers of his kingdom; and are furnished with *the word of wisdom*, (ver. 8.) for making a full revelation of the mind and will of God under the New Testament state: *secondly*, prophets, who are enabled to foretell important events, by the spirit of *prophecy*, (ver. 10.) and to explain Old Testament predictions, by *the word of knowledge*: (ver. 8. and chap. xiii. 2.) *thirdly*, teachers, who labour in the word and doctrine, whether they be evangelists, or pastors of particular churches, or preachers at large; (*Eph. iv. 11.*) and who by that faith, which is the gift of the spirit,

governments, diversities of tongues.

(*ver. 9.* see the note there) are fully persuaded of the truth of the gospel, and depend on the power and grace of God, for all protection and extraordinary assistance, in preaching it with boldness: *fourthly* persons that have an extensive power of working all sorts of miracles, (*ver. 10.*) *fifthly*, Those that have the gift of healing bodily diseases, without the use of human art: (*ver. 9.*) *sixthly*, such as, being of the lower class of prophets, foretell particular events, and are assistant to the apostles and the churches, in going to one place and another on special occasions, for various purposes: (See the note on *ver. 10.*) *seventhly*, such as, having the gift of discerning spirits, (*ver. 10.*) are men of great penetration and judgment, fit for presiding over the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church: And *lastly*, such as have any ability of speaking \*, and interpreting divers languages, by inspiration of the spirit †.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

29, 30. In the constitution of such a body as the church of Christ, even in its first erection, it is reasonable to suppose, that all its members, or officers should be apostles? or that they all should be prophets! or all preachers? or all workers of every kind of miracle? or is it to be supposed, that all should have the gift of healing bodily diseases? or all should be able to speak foreign languages? Or all, should have the faculty of interpreting them! This would be as absurd, as to imagine that the whole natural body were to consist of only one sort of members, each of which is fitted for every use, and so renders the rest needless; But they are all, as variously distributed, valuable and important, in their respective places, capacities, and order, to perform different

#### NOTES.

\* As interpretation of tongues in mentioned, *ver. 10.* and *ver. 30.* I have considered this as included in diversities of tongues.

† Most of the offices here spoken of, evidently tally with the gifts mentioned in *ver. 8.* 9. 10. and *that* very much in the same order. The greatest difficulty lies in *helps* and *governments*, with respect to which, I have mostly (for want of better light, and yet not with full satisfaction to my own mind) followed the critical account, which has been given of them, as parallel with *prophecy* and *discerning of spirits*; though I have varied from those learned authors, who, to keep up a perfect agreement between the order of this enumeration, wish that in the forementioned verses, have made *miracles* here, to correspond to the *gifts of healing* there; and the *gifts of healing* here, to the *working of miracles* there. See Dr Lightfoot's *Hor. Hebr. &c.* on the place, and *Miss. vol. Sacr.* Vol. i. pag. 74. &c. and the *table* facing that page. Methinks those diligent

writers have used too much force in interpretation, to maintain the very same order in both lists; since with a small variation of it, in these two particulars there is an exact correspondence in the whole, and the order of recital is of little importance. The curious reader may consult for other interpretations, Dr Hammond and Whitty on the place. But whatever be the determinate meaning of the apostle, in every particular of each of these lists, the *gifts* and *offices* were in themselves *distinct*; and *all* had not every one of them; and yet they were not so distinct, but that one person might have several of them and the apostles might have them all, from the highest to the lowest of them. But as the *Corinthians* prided themselves in the *gift of tongues*, the apostle, to humble them, mentions this *last*, as holding the lowest rank for usefulness of all the rest, according to what he says about them at large in the fourteenth chapter.

ferent services for the good of the whole; so that no one ought to envy another for his superior gifts and station; nor ought any one to despise another, or account him useless, because he may not be capable of serving so high and excellent purposes, and to so great a degree as himself.

31 But, how laudable soever it be for every one, without envying others, to desire, (were it the will of God) the most eminent gifts for service \*; ye are nevertheless too ambitious and carnal in debates and emulations about them, as if he were the only valuable and useful Christian, that has most of them: And yet I have a better way to direct you to, for glorifying God, and promoting the spiritual welfare of your own and other souls, than can be attained merely by the most flourishing gifts; and that is, to improve all that God bestows upon you, be it more or less, with a spirit of love, for each others edification. (*chap. xiii.*)

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Of what excellent use for the confirmation of the gospel, and first plantation of the church, were the extraordinary gifts of the spirit to apostles, prophets, teachers, and many others! And though those that were of a miraculous nature are now ceased, as being no further necessary; yet, blessed be God, ordinary gifts, of several kinds, are still continued for the edification of the church. But if we excel in any of these; alas, how apt are we to pride ourselves in them, and to despise others of lower attainments, for want of duly considering what we were before we received them, and to whom we owe them! We, like the Corinthians, that were carried away to dumb idols, were utterly unworthy of them; and they all proceed, as mere favours, from one and the same God and Father; from one and the same Lord Jesus; and from one and the same divine Spirit, who, though a distinct person from the Father and Son, is one God with them, and, in a common concurrence of operation, distributes all sorts of gifts, with sovereign freedom and power to whomsoever he will, for the glory of Christ, as our only Lord and Saviour, and for the benefit of his church: For as the natural body is one, and consists of many members, that are useful in their places, to complete it, and to perform the functions that are necessary to it: So the mystical body of Christ, which is his church, is one, as being united together by one spirit, and having communion with him, as its head, according to what is signified in baptism and the Lord's supper: But it has many members of different use, in their respective stations for the good of the whole; and they all together make up but one spiritual body, while each one in particular is as much a member of Christ as another; so that one of them cannot say, it has no need of the other. How should a sympathizing spirit be diffused through them all, that they may rejoice and mourn in each others prosperity and affliction! And how should the meanest, as well as the most eminent of them, be esteemed and honoured

### N O T E.

\* The word here rendered *covet* (*ζηλω*) is of the *indicative*, as well as *imperative* mood; and it seems most agreeable to the apostle's design of putting a check upon the pride, contentions, and envy, which prevailed among the *Corinthians*, on account of their spiritual gifts, to understand him as intimating, that they did, in a blamable manner, covet the best of that sort of gifts, as tho'

there were nothing more valuable to be aimed at, or these alone were sufficient for their glorying. (See *Mr Locke's note*). And yet as it may be both lawful and commendable, to desire them with an humble temper of mind, and for proper ends, I have given such a turn to the Paraphrase, as takes in that sense also, consistently with the other.



noured as dear to Christ, and as useful to the whole body! Every one ought to be contented with such spiritual gifts, as God has been pleased to vouchsafe to him, without envying others, and the only valuable end for which any should desire the best of them, is in order to further usefulness: And yet, be they of the higher or lower degree, a gracious principle of love to Christ, and one another, with a governing exercise of it, is still more excellent and advantageous, and more earnestly to be coveted.

## C H A P. XIII.

*The apostle shews the necessity and advantage of the grace of love, without which all spiritual gifts, all external acts of liberality, and even courage for martyrdom itself, will not profit us, 1.—3. And he represents its excellency by its properties and effects, 4.—7. By its abiding, after all gifts for edification shall cease, and by its preference to faith and hope, 8.—13.*

## TEXT.

Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

## PARAPHRASE.

SO great is the excellence and necessity of that true love, which seeks the good of others, for Christ's sake, out of affection to him, and in obedience to his command, that, to transfer things in a figure to myself, were I able, by the gift of the spirit, to speak with the utmost fluency and eloquence, the various languages of all the nations of the earth; and could I talk, even like the angels themselves, in the sublime and vigorous stile, in which they may be supposed to speak to one another; and yet were I destitute of the grace of God, and particularly of that noble grace of love, which springs from faith in Christ, (*Gal. v. 6.*) and is carried out to him, and to God through him, and to all his people, truth, and ways for his sake \*, I with all my pompous shew and flourish of words, am in reality no better than a man, that makes a loud noise, and is vainly ostentatious, without any advantage to my own soul, or likelihood of being serviceable to the souls of others, and without any acceptance to God; and so, after all, I am but like a hollow instrument of brass, or a high sounding cymbal †, which is altogether useless to itself, and

## N O T E S.

\* *Charity* (αγάπη) is by no means to be restrained to what we commonly call by that name, as consisting in *alms-deeds*, or acts of beneficence to the poor: For the apostle supposes, *ver. 3.* that we may give all our goods to feed the poor; and yet have none of the charity he speaks of. It ought therefore to be rather rendered *love*, as it properly signifies, and is usually translated in other places. And though it may primarily relate to that, which ought to be exercised to fellow Christians, and others; yet it is to be con-

sidered, as springing from a principle of love to God, and from faith in Christ, which works by love; or else it will not be a truly Christian grace, nor of that great worth and excellency, as is all along ascribed to it, in this discourse.

† Various are the conjectures of the learned about this *sounding brass* and *tinkling cymbal*. Some think, that by the *sounding brass*, is meant the *sounding trumpet*, and by the *tinkling cymbal*, the *high sounding cymbal*, both of which are mentioned in *Psal. c. 3, 5.* and that

and has no great musical variety, or agreeableness in it's notes, for the pleasure or profit of others.

2 And if I had the spirit of prophecy to foretel distant events, and to explain and apply all the predictions of the Old Testament; had I also the clearest insight into all the sublime, difficult, and important points of the gospel revelation; and had I the greatest compass of all knowledge, human and divine, that ever any man attained to; yea, had I the highest degrees of the faith of miracles †, for the performing of all sorts of wonderful works, even to the removing of mountains from their basis, and casting them into the sea: (*Mark. xi. 23.*) if, notwithstanding all these extraordinary powers and achievements, I have no true love to God, and others for his sake, and do not exercise these gifts for his glory and their good, I am an insignificant creature, of no value in his account; and have nothing of true religion or Christianity in me; but shall be found, at last, among those, who had *prophefied in Christ's name, and cast out devils, and done many wonderful works*; but to whom he will say, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* (*Matth. vii. 22, 23.*)

3 And if my liberality were to abound so far, as to sell all that I have in the world, and to dispose of it, for the relief of the poor, according to that high instance of trial, which our Lord proposed to the rich man in the gospel: (*Matth. xix. 21.*) yea, if I had courage and fortitude enough, to go into such an heroic act of self-denial, as to sacrifice my own life, and give up my body to be burnt at the stake, for my profession of Christ; and yet have not sincere love to him, and to his members, interest, and honour, as its principal, it would be of no advantage to my spiritual and eternal concerns: For all this a man may do, from ostentation and vain

#### N O T E.

that the cymbal, as well as the trumpet, was a wind instrument of brass or silver. See *Dr Hammond*. Others think that a *knelling cymbal* was, when two hollow balls of brass were struck one against another, without any measure, or tone of music, but with a rude, inartificial, and howling sound. See *Lightfoot's* *hebrew and talmudical Exercitation*. But others, apprehend with the greatest probability, suppose, that a cymbal consisted of two large hollow plates, or small deep dishes of brass with broad brims, which were struck one against the other, to fill up the symphony in great concerts of music, and made a great deep sound, but had scarce any variety of musical notes. See *Locke* on the place, and the elaborate enquiry of the author of *Forti-*

*ita Sacra in Commentar. de Corinthis ad cor. cap. vi. & alibi*. But this author thinks the notes were more various and musical.

† This cannot be meant of *seeing* or *justifying* faith: For that faith always *works love*; (*Gal. v. 6.*) whereas it is supposed, that this faith may be without charity or love: But faith here means the *faith of miracles*: For it stands among the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, and miraculous powers unto the removing of mountains; and yet it may also be understood of a *rational or intellectual* faith, as to the truth of the gospel, together with a *firm dependence* on Christ for *miraculous* assistance; because all this must be supposed to be included in the faith that wrought miracles in his name.

It profiteth me nothing.

vain glory, to get, and leave, a good name in the world, or from a selfish vain conceit of merit by it; and *that* is all the reward, which such an one will ever have. (*Matth. vi. 2, 5, 16.*)

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

4 The true Christian love, I am speaking of, is a most amiable, generous, and operative grace; it endures injuries, affronts, and provocations, with great patience and long suffering; passes them by, and bears with them, instead of allowing wrathful passions to rise, and boil, and vent themselves in severe resentments; and it is courteous, affable and beneficent, (*χρησιν*) ready on all occasions to do good: Love doth not grieve or grudge at the prosperity of others, or envy them the riches, honours, or any excellent qualities, whether of a civil or religious nature, that they enjoy: Love doth not behave with insolence, contempt, and scorn toward persons of inferior rank and attainments; nor act rashly, or perversely, (*οπισθεν*) to the disadvantage of others: Nor doth it fill a man with high and proud conceits of himself, of his own gifts, or parts, graces, or worldly emoluments: but, *in honour, prefers others to himself; and in humbleness of mind esteems others, better than himself.* (*Rom. xii. 10. and Phil. ii. 3.*)

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil,

3 It does not act out of character, (*καταχρησιν*) unsuitable to one's station, age, or business; doth nothing that is unbecoming the man or the Christian; or that is indecent, base, and vile in itself, or in the common account of the wise and sober part of mankind: It is not so selfish, as to aim at, or pursue any private personal benefit, to the detriment, or neglect of others, or of the public welfare; nor doth it inordinately seek after riches, honour, or pleasure, reputation, and applause, at the expence of others: It is not soon exasperated, and thrown into a furious passion, that renders railing for railing; nor is it apt to be angry without a cause; nor to carry resentments beyond due bounds, either as to the degree, or the continuance of them: Nor is it ready to suspect evil of others; or to put the worst construction upon their conduct; much less doth it seek to find faults, and charge them by mere conjectures and strained inferences; or to aggravate what may be amiss or meditate mischief of any kind.

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

6 Christian love takes no pleasure in doing any false or unrighteous thing in itself, or in seeing it done by others; but grieves at their sins and failures and rejoices in their just and regular deportment, and in it's own sincere and laudable behaviour towards all it has to do with; and it delights to see the truth of the gospel, and real,

7 Bearerh all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether

vital, practical religion in ourselves and others.

7 It covers (177) the faults of others, as much as may be consistent with duty; (1 Pet. iv. 8.) bears with their infirmities; and suffers many injuries, rather than retaliate them: (Rom. xv. 1. and Gal. vi. 2.) it is much inclined to believe every good thing it hears of others, as far as there is any manner of ground for it, and will believe well of all it's friends and acquaintance, and even of its enemies, till it has convincing reasons to the contrary: and when things look suspicious, it hopes the best, as long as it can, and does not easily give up a case as desperate, when it appears to be very bad; but is willing to think that in due time, through the grace of God, it may be mended: and it continues firm, and patient, and maintains a noble fortitude of soul, under all the hardships and ill-usage it meets with.

8 This excellent grace of love is, furthermore, of an abiding nature; it is of perpetual use in all circumstances of this life, and is never utterly lost out of the heart, that is once truly seasoned with it; nor will it die with us, or be needless in the heavenly world; we shall carry it thither, where it will subsist, and reign, and be perfected in all it's lustre and glory for ever, but is otherwise with all the spiritual gifts, that any here are favoured with; as for instance, suppose they be gifts: of prophecy, for telling things to come, or interpreting old testament scriptures, by immediate inspiration, to the edification of others, and confirmation of the gospel †, these may be taken away, and will be so, as unnecessary to the gospel state, after it's revelation shall be fully compleated and settled; and there will be no manner of occasion for these, to assist and confirm the faith of the church in heaven, as there is at present upon earth. Or suppose they be miraculous gifts of speaking all sorts of languages, for a sign to them that believe not, (Chap. xiv. 22.) and for propagating the gospel in various nations, these may be lost, and will cease as soon as the present use for them shall expire; and there will be no need of these in heaven, where there are no infidels, or strangers; but all our fellow citizens, who believe in the same things, and speak one and the same language

#### N O T E.

† I take prophecy and knowledge in this, and the next verse, as well as tongues, to relate to the extraordinary gifts, that belonged to the first state of christianity; and have considered them as employed in this world, only to the then present benefit of the church, but as altogether useless in the other world, which the apostle had principally in view: For,

doubtless, in heaven immediate revelations to all the saints, will be more conspicuous, and their knowledge more extensive, than the utmost that ever could be attained in this imperfect state, and they will not want the aid of ministerial instruction, in different languages, after the same manner, as they do here.

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

language, which is easily and equally intelligible to them all. Or suppose they be the gifts of extraordinary revelation in the knowledge of divine truths, for the instruction of others, and for their learning, by those means, the mysteries of God, which before they were unacquainted with, these also may be lost, and will become useless in after ages of this world, when the facanonical shall be finished; and will be superseded and done away, as being no further necessary for such purposes, when in God's light we shall all see light, and shall see Christ as he is, in the world to come. (*Psal.* xxxvi. 9. and *1 John* iii. 2.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

9 For even the best and wisest of us have, after all, but very short and narrow conceptions of the deep and great things of God, compared with what we shall have in heaven; and all the prophetic and ministerial instructions, that any of us deliver, by immediate inspiration, for the good of the church, are only for a little while, as there may be occasions for them; and are very far from taking in the whole compass of future events, or a complete view of all knowables, or of every thing that may be supposed to be contained in the scripture revelation.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

10 But when we shall arrive at that state of all perfection, which we are looking, hoping and longing for in a better world; then all the defects and obscurities of our present knowledge and foresight, and the imperfection that attends our present way of receiving, and communicating them will be removed; and we shall have as plain and extensive views of all the then present and future things, as are fit for the most exalted creatures to have, or as can be requisite to make up the highest happiness and enjoyment our nature is capable of, and that in some at present unknown way of immediate intuition, which shall abide for ever.

11 When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man

11 The difference between the present and future state is like that of a child and grown man, which, in my own case, as I can easily recollect, stands thus; when I was in the young and tender age of life, I talked and prattled about human affairs after a weak and childish manner; and conceived of them, was affected toward them, and reasoned about them, like a child that was no competent judge, and knew very little of them: but when I grew up to a state of manhood, I corrected my childish, crude, and mistaken notions, and threw off my former trifling and silly ways of thinking and speaking about them: and thus it is with respect to our present, compared with our future knowledge of divine themes

man I put away  
childish things.

11 For now we  
see through a glass,  
darkly; but then  
face to face: now  
I know in part;  
but then shall I  
know

themes, when we shall unlearn many things that we here learnt; shall pity, or smile at all our present impertinences, and correct all our mistakes about them; and shall have juster and clearer apprehensions of what we now have some true acquaintance with.

12 For while we dwell in mortal flesh, and carry about a body of sin, which darkens the mind, we see and conceive of the grand sublime mysteries of the kingdom of God, with obscurity and imperfection, in the word and ordinances, as in, or by means of a looking-glass, which shews the object only by reflection\*; and our thoughts about many of them are puzzling and intricate, like what we have of things, that are proposed to us in a riddle, instead of plain and proper words: But, when we get to heaven, we shall behold them in a more exact manner, according to what they are in themselves and as clearly and distinctly, as one man beholds the face of another in their immediate converse together; (2 John ver. 12. and *Epist.* iii. ver, 14.) and *that* without any darkening medium between them, which, in, this frail state of the body and mind, is necessary to be interposed between the divine majesty and us; since *no man can see his face; and live*: (Exod. xxxiii. 20, 23.) I myself, notwithstanding all my visions and revelations, (2 Cor. xii. 1, 4.) have but a scanty, imperfect insight into the profound truths of God, many of which surpass the comprehensions of my mind, while there are many others, that have not been communicated to me: So that, it is but a very little portion that I know of the great God, and of his counsels and methods of wisdom and grace by Jesus Christ, and of the exalted themes, employments, and enjoyments of heaven, compared with what they are in themselves, and will one day appear to be. But, when I arrive at the bright regions above, I shall have as certain, immediate and familiar a knowledge of them, as any of my most intimate friends and acquaintance now have of me; yea, though there is an infinite distance, between the knowledge which God has of me, and the utmost of that, which I ever can have of him; yet my

way

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to be a double allusion, (*ὡς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς* is *ὡς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς*) one to a glass, which presents an object to the eye, though with some obscurity; and is to be understood, not of a perspective, such sort of glasses being a modern invention; but of a mirror, or looking-glass, which antiently consisted of some polished metal, such as copper or brass, or steel, or gold; Exod. xxxviii. 8. Job xxxviii.

16. and Rev. xxi. 18. which did not give so clear a view of the object, as our looking-glasses do: (See also the note on 2 Cor. xii. 18.) The other is an allusion to a riddle, which is an obscure way of representing things to the understanding, and requires the labour of the mind to find them out; according to some copies read (*ὡς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς*) *as in a riddle.* Vid. Mill. & Brz. in loc.

know even as also  
I am known.

13 And now  
abideth faith,  
hope, charity,  
these three; but  
the greatest of  
these is charity.

way of knowing him, and all heavenly objects, will be by a sort of immediate inspection, resembling that, with which both he and the holy angels now know me \*.

13 And to conclude what I would offer, to set forth the excellence and importance of truly christian love, it has not only the preference to all spiritual gifts; but even to every other special and saving grace: for, during our abode in this present life, the three cardinal graces of faith, hope, and love, reside inseparably in the hearts of the saints, and are of continual use, and vastly more to be preferred than any spiritual gifts whatsoever; yea, they are all constituents of the christian character, and, ought to be in daily exercise till we die. Faith is most immediately necessary to our pardon and justification; hope to our comfort; (*Rom. v. 1, 2.*) and love to our conformity to God, and cheerful obedience to his commands: (*1 John iv. 7, 8, 16. and v. 3.*) But the most excellent of all these is *love*, as it not only, like faith and hope, relates to God and ourselves, but to others also; as faith and hope are designed to promote it, and are proved to be genuine by it; and as it is the brightest image of the God of love, and will go to heaven with us, and be perfected there, where faith in an *unseen Jesus*, and as *the evidence of things not seen*, (*1 Pet. i. 8. and Heb. xi. 1.*) shall be swallowed up in vision; and hope, as an expectation of future and unseen blessedness, to relieve us under all our present burdens, (*Rom. viii. 24, 25.*) shall be swallowed up in complete enjoyment †; while love to God and Christ, saints and angels, will make up a great part of the harmony and happiness of heaven, and will glow and flame with the most disinterested and delightful ardour for ever.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How ambitious should we be of abounding in every exercise of so amiable a grace, as brotherly Christian love, which results from faith in Christ, and from love to him, and to God through him! What are all miraculous gifts of tongues, of prophecy, of immediate revelations, of working wonders, and of a firm assent to the great truths of the gospel, whereby we might be fitted for service in the church? And what are all external acts of the most generous liberality to the poor,

#### N O T E.

\* As the apostle does not say by whom he was known, I have taken the liberty to supply it various ways, in the first of which, perhaps, I may be singular; but it appears to me to be easy, natural, and agreeable to the representation given, in the former part of the verse, of our intimate manner of knowing things in heaven, like that of *seeing face to face*.

† Faith and hope, in their present ways of acting, will cease in heaven; and yet there

will ever be a firm persuasion of the truth of all that God shall make known in that state, and an entire trust and confidence in him, for the endless perpetuity of all possible blessedness; and separate spirits there will, doubtless, live in an assured hope and expectation of the resurrection and re-union of the body, together with all the glory, which will attend that final manifestation of the Sons of God.

poor, and suffering martyrdom itself for our profession of Christ's name, without a principle of grace in the heart, and particularly the grace of love, to animate, spiritualize, and improve them for the glory of God, and our own and other's good? They may appear with specious and noisy pomp; but, without love, will be of no saving advantage to us, and will leave us miserable creatures for ever. How admirable is evangelical love in its benevolent temper and behaviour, meekness, patience, humility, and forbearance; in its candour, and willingness to believe and hope the best; in its sympathy, disinterestedness, and generosity; and in its tender, touching, and friendly care, for the welfare of others! And of how much longer duration is this excellent grace, than all spiritual gifts, which may be lost, even while we live, and will have their period with this world at farthest, and be useless in the next; and which at best leave us very imperfect in our knowledge, like children in understanding, while we are here! And though faith and hope abide with us, and are as necessary as love, during our continuance in this world; yet love is the most eminent of these graces, as on many other accounts, so especially, because it will abide, and be perfected together with our knowledge of divine things, in heaven; where, not only all spiritual gifts, but faith and hope themselves, in their present use and exercise, as well as several other graces, that are suited to this state of imperfection and warfare shall cease; and we shall have no further occasion for them to all eternity.

## C H A P. XIV.

*The apostle recommends such spiritual gifts, as are suited to answer the purposes of Christian love for the edification of others, and presers prophecy to the gift of tongues, 1,—5. Illustrates the unprofitableness of barely speaking in unknown languages, without interpreting them, by several comparisons, 6,—12. Exhorts to an intelligent sort of worship, that may be profitable to others, as well as ourselves, 13,—20. Shews the proper use of the gift of tongues, and the greater advantage of prophesying, 21,—25. Reproves and regulates various disorders which arose in religious assemblies, from a vain ostentation of gifts, 26,—33. And from women's speaking in the church, 34,—40.*

## TEXT.

Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts, but

## PARAPHRASE.

**F**ROM what I have been saying to recommend Christian love, (*chap. xiii.*) Let me earnestly intreat you to cultivate and improve the exercise of this important grace \*: And as to spiritual gifts, I would that ye should be zealously concerned to abound in them also; provided it be only with a view of glorifying God, and being useful to others: But, in opposition to those that are too fond of the gift of tongues (*ver. 12.*) for vain glorious ends (*See the note on chap. 12. 31.*) I would chiefly recommend to you the gift of prophecy † whereby

## NOTE.

\* The church at Corinth was very much wanting in their christian temper, while there were strifes and divisions among them, and one said I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, &c. (*chap. iii. 3, 4.*) and there were some among them, that would set up false teachers against the apostle Paul, as appears from a great part of this epistle, and

particularly from the third and fourth chapters; and therefore he not only spent the highest encomiums upon charity or love; (*chap. xiii.*) but here urges them to pursue or follow after it. See, for an account of what this charity is, the note on *Chap. xiii. 1.*

† By prophecy here, seems not to be meant foretelling things to come; but opening the scriptures,



but rather that ye may prophesy.

whereby ye may be enabled, under divine illumination and assistance, to explain and apply the sacred oracles, or to deliver instructions under any other form, to the edification and confirmation of one another, upon the principles of the charity, which seeks not her own. (*Chap. xiii. 5.*)

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit, he speaketh mysteries.

2 For he who, by the gift of tongues, speaks of divine things in a language, which his hearers are unacquainted with, doth not therein speak to the understanding of these men though to the understanding of God, who, being the author of all languages, and of the extraordinary gift of speaking them, can't but know the meaning of every word in them: For no person that is a stranger to the tongue in which another talks, can tell what he says, or learn any thing from it; but it is all mystery to him, how excellent and important soever the doctrines may be which the preacher utters by the gift of Spirit and how intelligible and advantageous soever they may be to his own soul \*.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

3 But he who explains the prophetick writings of the *Old Testament*, and thereby casts a light upon the *New*, and he who, by the inspiration of the spirit, publishes still further articles of evangelical truth, in plain and intelligible terms, answers the end of preaching, in accommodating himself to the understandings of men, to whom he speaks for their improvement in light and grace; and for exciting them to the duties of their holy calling, and promoting their consolation in Christ.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown

4 He who delivers his sermons in a language, or style above the capacities of his audience, may express things that greatly tend to his own spiritual improvement and  
fo

#### N O T E S.

scriptures, and declaring the whole counsel of God, by immediate inspiration, including also the most ordinary assistances of the spirit, which are obtained by reading, meditation, and prayer: For the foretelling of future events was not so much to the then present edification of the church, as expounding the word of God, and preaching the truth, as it is in Jesus; because the chief advantage of the predictions of inspired men lies in the confirmation of our faith in after-times, when the things themselves come to pass: But prophesying is here preferred to the gift of tongues; because it was to the present edification of the church. And under the head of prophecy, we may include breaking out into songs of praise, under an assuance of the spirit, which, in the case of *Zacharias*, is called his prophesying, *Luke i. 67.* and which seems to be brought into that class in the 15th verse of this chapter. This may be reckoned to prophecy; because we are said to teach and admonish one another in psalms, and

*hymns and spiritual songs*; (*Col. iii. 16.*) and those hymns that were uttered in public, by the immediate suggestion of the spirit, seem to have been pronounced only by the inspired person himself; or, at least, others could not join in them with the voice, till he had delivered them out.

† Dr *Lightsfoot* supposes, with some probability, that the tongue, principally intended by the apostle, was the *Hebrew*, which, of a long time past, was not the common and mother tongue, but was gone into disuse; but now, by the gift of tongues, it was restored to the ministers of the church: And he suspects that the persons, whom the apostle had in his eye, judaized in this matter; and that they retained the use of the *Hebrew* language in the church, although unknown to the common people; and followed the custom of the synagogue, where the scripture was read, prayers were made, and doctrines preached in the *Hebrew* tongue. See his *Talmudical Exercitation*.

known tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

so may affect his own heart, which he ought indeed to aim at in all his holy ministrations, though that should not be the only end of his engaging in them: But he who interprets the scripture, and makes known the mind and will of God about the way of salvation, not only profits his own soul; but, according to the great design of preaching, he is useful to the church in building it up, by additions of new converts, and by promoting the growth of its members in knowledge, faith and love, holiness and obedience, through the agency of the spirit.

5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

5 I could heartily wish, if it so pleased God, that ye all might be furnished \* (as many of you are) with the gift of tongues: But as this is of little use, unless when ye come among people that don't apprehend the meaning of the language, which ye can speak without this supernatural faculty; I much rather desire that ye may be skilful in the doctrines of divine revelation, to explain and apply them: For he is the more excellent man, more to be esteemed, and of much greater importance to the church, (*Matth. xi. 12.*) who, in his ministry, discovers a deep insight into the scriptures of the Old Testament, and into the peculiarities of the gospel dispensation, than he who delivers his sentiments in strange languages; unless, while in them he speaks the wonderful works of God, (*Acts ii. 11.*) he also explains to his hearers what he says, in a tongue which they understand; that the church of Christ may be really benefited by his labours. And the like may be said of such high scholastic strains of learning and eloquence, as rather amuse, than instruct an auditory.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

6 Now, my brethren, whom I love in the truth, (*2 John ver. 1.*) permit me, for the avoiding of envy, to illustrate this argument, with a reference to myself who have an interest in, at least, some of your affections; suppose I were to come to you, and to speak in languages, which ye are utter strangers to, of what advantage would it be to you; unless I were to interpret them, and to communicate to you, in intelligible terms, such things as are made known to me, and as I am commissioned to declare, either by a present immediate revelation of some new truth; or by that stock of knowledge in general, which I have the gospel; or by opening and confirming the prophetick writings of the Old Testa-

#### N O T E.

\* It appears from *ver. 12, 18, 23, 26, 27, 28.* that many of this church, and perhaps those particularly who opposed the apostle, greatly prized themselves in the gift of tongues, and made use of it, in a disorderly

manner, to the preventing of more useful exercises in their religious assemblies; and therefore the apostle speaks the more distinctly of it, to humble them, and to regulate their ostentations and unprofitable use of it.

Testament, to cast a light upon the New; or by delivering its most important doctrines, relating to faith and practice \*?

6 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

7 And to shew how useless talking in unknown tongues would be, we may compare it to the artificial sounds of musical instruments, which are themselves insensible and inanimate; and are only significant by the tunes that are played upon them. Suppose, for instance, a pipe or harp were made use of for exciting different passions, and directing different motions, songs, and gestures, in mourning and dancing; (*Jer. ix. 17; 18. and xlviii. 36. Job xxi. 11, 12. Matth. ix. 23, and xi. 17.*) unless there were to be made a proper and known distinction in the notes, who could tell for what purpose they are sounded, or be suitably affected with it or how to conduct himself answerable to it? The like may be said of musical instruments of war:

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

8 For if the trumpet were to sound a march, a charge, a retreat, or other point of war, at random, or in such a confused manner, as should give no determinate notice of what duty is to be done, when an army is drawing up against an enemy, what soldier could tell how to accommodate himself to it, or get into proper array for the battle?

9 So likewise, you, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

9 In like manner it may well be said, unless your tongue expresses words capable of being understood by your hearers, how is it possible for them to know what is the subject of your discourse; what it is that ye aim at, or say upon it; or what use they are to make of it? For all that ye speak in an unknown language, is to no manner of purpose, as to them: It is all a mere senseless and confused sound in their ears, that is lost in the air; ye therein speak, as it were, only to the wind, your hearers not being able to understand one word of what ye say.

10 There are, it may be, to many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

10 There is indeed a great variety of languages in the world, perhaps as many as there are different nations upon earth; and none of them is without a distinct meaning, which is understood by the people that commonly talk it; all the words in each of them are for something, as they are used by those whose mother tongue it is, or who have learnt to converse in it; but they are signs of ideas only to those that are acquainted with them.

11 IF

#### N O T E.

\* I have given such a sense of all these terms in this conjunction of them, as seems to preserve a distinction between them, and to suit the design of the present argument;

better than most that have occurred to my thoughts; but the reader, by consulting other commentators, may find different turns of interpretation, and make his own choice.

11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian: and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and

11 If therefore I were to fall in company with one, who talks to me in words, which are very intelligible to himself, but the signification of which is quite unknown to me, I should be like a wild unconvertible foreigner to such a speaker, as not being able to receive his instructions, or to make any reply; and he, who speaks in that strange language, would be like one that talks gibberish to me, I not having any notion of what he means.

12 And this is the very case with you, if ye deliver divine things to others in a language, which they can put no sense upon. But since many of you are so eagerly desirous of excelling in spiritual gifts; let it be your great ambition, not to attain, use, and exercise that, which is so unprofitable, as the gift of tongues, is among people that can't be instructed and edified by it; but to abound in those more excellent ones, that are adapted to promote the knowledge, faith and love, piety and increase of the church.

13 If therefore any of you be fond of speaking languages, by a miraculous power, which he himself was before a stranger to, and which those, that have not learnt it, can make nothing of; let him beg of God, that, when he comes among such sort of people, he may also be enabled to interpret what he says in their vulgar tongue, that it may not be a heap of unsensed words to them; but that they may be profited by the discourse.

14 For to transfer this again to myself, (*ver. 6.*) as I said before of preaching or prophesying; so I would now say of praying in a public assembly, if my social prayer be offered up, as it ought to be, in their hearing and as their mouth to God, and it be in a language which they don't understand, my own heart may indeed be engaged in the prayer, as knowing what the petitions are, which I present to the Lord; but my own understanding the prayer is of no advantage to the rest of the company, who, for want of knowing the sense of my expressions, can't join with me in it, or be suitably affected by it.

15 What then is the sum and upshot of all that I have been saying on this head; and what is fittest and best for me to do in these cases? It is this, when I am to pray in a public congregation, it shall be my great desire and concern, that I may do it with spiritual affections

#### N O T E.

\* This plainly condemns the practice of the papists publicly praying in Latin, when the people understand nothing of that language.

and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will, sing with the understanding also.

sections, by the special assistance, and dictate of the Holy Spirit; and that at the same time I may pray, not only with an understanding of my own words, but in such a manner, as that the understandings of my fellow worshippers may likewise apprehend what I say: And in all parts of prophesying, and particularly that which consists in uttering the praises of God, (see the note on *ver.* 1.) what I would principally aim at is, that I may publish the honours of his name by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, with spiritual melody in my own heart; (*Eph.* v. 19.) and that I may not only myself understand what I sing; but may do it in such words, as they, who are to join with me therein, or to be instructed thereby, may understand it also, and so sing with melody in their own hearts-too.

15 Else, when thou shalt blest with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

16 Otherwise, to apply this to yourselves, were any of you to offer thanksgiving, blessing, and praise to God in church assemblies, under a divine *Afflatus*, and this were to be in an unsensed language, how is it possible that any private and ignorant person, who, knowing not only his mother tongue, comes into the congregation, and fills up the place of a common hearer, in order to his learning and improving by your holy ministrations, should ever be able to give his assent and consent, and either in heart, or voice, add his *Amen*, at the close of the service \*, since he can't tell the meaning of what ye have delivered?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified,

17 For you indeed, as far as your own edification is concerned in it, may fill up this part of worship in a spiritual and heavenly manner, with good judgment and devout affections; but the hearer, who does not understand what you say, can't possibly be profited by it.

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all:

18 For my own part, I am indeed very thankful to my gracious God, for favouring me with this, as well as every other spiritual gift; insomuch that I am enabled to speak, as occasions require, in the extensive course of my ministry, with many more foreign languages, than any of your most celebrated teachers, or than all of you, taken together, have ever been furnished with, or called to make use of.

19 Nevertheless

#### N O T E.

† The place of the unlearned (*τὸ ἄσκητον*) signifies the place of a private, as well as of an illiterate or ignorant person, alluding to the place where common hearers were wont to sit in the congregation: And here seems to be a reference to the custom of the Jewish church, when at the end of the Minister's public thanksgiving and praise, all the people answered, *Amen*; *Neb.* viii. 6. and 1

*Coron.* xvi. 36. which was also practised in the primitive church, particularly at the close of Eucharistical prayers, when the people used to say, with loud acclamation, *Amen*, in testimony of their concurrence and approbation, *Vid. Just. Mart. Apol.* ii. p. 27, 28. & *Euseb. Eccl. hist.* lib. vii. cap. ix. p. 235. cum Not. Vener.

19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people: and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

19 Nevertheless, so little do I pride myself in this extraordinary endowment, or value it for itself, or use it in an ostentatious way, that, when I come into a Christian assembly, I had much rather utter ever so few words were it five only, with judgment and understanding, so as to express my meaning intelligibly, and for the instruction and advantage of others, as well as for my own edification, than to make ten thousand fine discourses in a language, which the people do not understand, and consequently cannot be profited by.

20 Let me accordingly entreat you, my brethren, not to go into a weak and childish temper, in affecting novelties, and pompous appearances, such as the showy gift of tongues; and in esteeming them, rather than things that are more solid and useful: Ye ought, indeed, to resemble little children, in the meekness, harmlessness, and humility of your disposition and behaviour, (*Matth. xviii. 3, 4.*) free from all malicious, proud, and envious designs: and, when at any time angry, ye, as is usual with children, should soon cool again; but in knowledge, judgment, and discretion, especially with regard to your apprehensions, and management of spiritual things; it becomes you to think and act, and approve yourselves, as men grown up to maturity of understanding.

21 That ye may do thus in the use of unknown tongues, and not to be over-fond of them, I beseech you to consider, that in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, (see the note on *John x. 34.*) as particularly in *Deut. xviii. 49.* and *Isa. xxviii. 11.* it is said, by way of *Threatning* and *rebuke* to *Israel*, for their obstinacy and infidelity, to the following purpose, I will speak to this incorrigible people, by the unknown language of foreign nations, who, by my providence, shall have the rule over them\*; and after that, by inspired men, who shall deliver my counsel in strange languages, by a miraculous gift, to convince them of their disobedience and unbelief, in not hearkning to the messages of my servants, which were delivered to them in the plainest terms: But, notwithstanding all this, such is the perverseness of their hearts, that they will

#### N O T E.

\* I have taken in what I apprehend to be the primary sense of these prophecies, as it related to God's making foreign nations, such as the *Affrians* and *Chaldeans*, a scourge to *Israel*, to convince them of their sin, in not hearkning to his prophets; and the secondary sense, as, according to the apostle's interpretation, it related to the gift of

tongues, under the New Testament dispensation, which would carry plain tokens of divine inspiration in those persons, whom the Jews rejected; and whom they would continue obstinately to reject, notwithstanding this further evidence, that what they spoke was from God.

will not attend unto, and receive the instructions of my providence in one case, any more than of my servants in the other, says the Lord.

21 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not but for them which believe.

22 So that, as may be gathered from these passages, speaking in unknown tongues, by an extraordinary gift, is such an evident token of miraculous operation, as is adapted and designed, not for the edification of those, that do already believe in Christ, according to the gospel revelation of him; but for the conviction of infidels, and for a testimony against such as continue obstinate in their unbelief, as well as for the more speedy propagation of Christianity in heathen countries; and therefore it is not proper to use it unnecessarily in the church, as though they were still in a state of infidelity, and needed a continuance of this confirmation of the gospel among them: But preaching, or explaining, confirming, and applying the doctrines of the Old and New Testament, is suited, by the ordination and blessing of God, not only for the conversion of unbelievers\*; but likewise for the further instruction, edification, and establishment of those, that have already believed thro' grace; and so ought to be ordinarily used in church assemblies for that purpose, rather than the gift of tongues, as being most profitable for them.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

23 If therefore the whole church meet together for the worship of God, as is customary with all the churches, in one and the same place†; and all that officiate in it, were to deliver themselves, either in prayer, praise or preaching, in one and another language, that is not understood by the auditory, nor is interpreted to them, that it may be so; and if any ordinary private persons, (*ιδιωται*, see the note on *ver.* 16.) that can make no sense of what is said; or any that are strangers to the gospel, and under the power of unbelief, were to come into your congregation at such a time, What would they think and say of you; Would this be a likely means of convincing and converting them? Or rather, would they not despise and ridicule you, and conclude that ye are all a parcel of wild, frantic enthusiasts, that are beside yourselves, and are possessed

#### N O T E S.

\* Since preaching or prophesying is the means, which God has appointed, and owns for the conversion of sinners, as appears from *Rom.* x. 14.—17. and *1 Cor.* i. 21. it must be, not absolutely, but in some restrained sense, that we are to understand the apostle, when he says, prophesying serves not for them that believe not.

church, as coming together in one place, (*εἰς τὸ αὐτοῦ*) as he also did in *chap.* xi. 20. shews that churches in those days were congregational, or such as met, and ordinarily assembled together in one place, for the celebration of divine ordinances; and that all their members were very careful to give their attendance, as much as possible, at their stated meetings.

† The apostle's speaking of the whole

selfed of the devil, rather than conducted and influenced by the infinitely wise and good Spirit of God?

23 But if all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not or one unlearned, he is <sup>un</sup>convinced of all, he is judged of all:

24 But if every ministering servant, in his proper turn, prays and expounds, and preaches in a plain intelligible stile; and any unbeliever, or private and ignorant person, providentially comes in to hear, whether out of curiosity, or from some other motive, he is in the way of being brought to serious and rational conviction; and, through the concurring light and power of the blessed Spirit, will be effectually convinced of his own sin, misery, and danger, and of the excellency, suitableness, and importance, together with his own need of and concernment in those things, which every speaker utters; and his conscience will be thereby brought to form a just judgment concerning his own state and condition, and to condemn himself, as guilty before God, by means of what they severally deliver and enforce, according to the word.

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

25 And so the inmost thoughts and dispositions of his heart, relating to God and himself, are as plainly described, and laid open to the view of his own mind; as if the preacher had known them, and designedly accommodated his discourses and prayers to them; and being thus convinced and judged by the power of the word, as brought home and applied to his own soul, he will be struck with a reverend awe of the divine Majesty; and with the deepest contrition and abasement, such as, in times of the most solemn humiliation, use to be expressed by the prostration of the body, down to the ground, will earnestly implore God's pardoning and renewing grace, and join in worshipping him with you; and, from what experience he himself has of the wonderful impressions made upon his heart, he will go away with a testimony in his own conscience, and will tell his friends and acquaintance, That verily God, your God, is in a special manner present with you, to own and bless you, and your ministrations; and to give remarkable tokens of his power and favour among you.

26 How is it then, brethren? when you come together, every one

26 What then is to be done, my brethren? How are your spiritual gifts to be improved for promoting these valuable ends, when ye gather together for religious performances \*? One of you is endued with, and stands

#### N O T E.

\* Every one of you cannot relate to every individual member of the church, but only to those that were to minister in sacred things; nor can it be supposed that each one even of them, had all the gifts here mentioned: But

they were all distributed among them; so that one, who was to lead the worship, had one, or more of them, and another had others. It is therefore necessary to take the universal term, here used, in a restrained and distributive



one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done to edifying.

stands ready to give vent to a spirit of *Psalmody*; add-ther to some doctrine of the gospel, for exhortation and comfort; another has the gift of tongues; another has some new discovery, by immediate inspiration, to communicate to the church; another has the gift of interpreting what is spoken in foreign languages; and one or other of you, is too forward to shew his own gifts, and to be heard first, or, perhaps, to display his talents in one part of the congregation, while another is exercising his in another: But, let none of these gifts of the Spirit be used in an unprofitable, unseasonable, or disorderly way; so as that one should improperly interrupt another, or that those of less importance should supersede, or prevent those of greater: On the contrary, let all things be put into such a due course, and carried on in such a regular, as may be best suited, and, through divine grace, may be most effectual, to the enlarging and building up of the whole church, and promoting the spiritual growth of every member of it, till the work of God, in all it's parts and degrees, shall be perfected in them.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course: and let one interpret.

27 If, notwithstanding what has been said about the gift of tongues, as of little use for the edification of the church, (See the note on *ver. 5.*) any of you be still desirous to exercise it, let it be at suitable times; and in a regular manner, so that, at one meeting, there ordinarily may not be above two or three speakers at most †, and, *that* not all together, one here, and another there; but one after another, in their turns; and let there be one, who shall faithfully interpret in the vulgar tongue, what other says in a foreign language, that the people may be capable of receiving instruction.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him

28 But if there be no one present, that has the gift of interpreting what is delivered in a strange language, Let him that would use it, refrain speaking in it to the congregation; since, in that case, no good purpose can be answered to them by it; and † let him be contented to employ that talent in private prayer at home between God, who is equally acquainted with all languages, and his own soul, which also understands it, and may be edified by it.

29 With

#### NOTES.

butive sense, as this, and several other universal particles are evidently to be understood, in multitudes of other places of scripture.

† Here, as Dr *Lightsfoot* observes, is a reference to the order of synagogue worship, in which one read the scripture in the Hebrew language; another interpreted, or preached; and another prayed.

‡ As it is disorderly and unseasonable for persons to spend their time in acts of private

devotion after public worship is begun, and their attendance to it is required, the apostle's advice seems rather to relate to a man's privately uttering the thoughts of his heart at home, in a language, that was understood by none but God and himself, than to his employing himself in that manner, while he was called to join with the congregation in publick worship.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

29 With respect also (*ἐκ*) to the use of the gift of *prophecy*, Let but two or three of them, that are endued with it, speak at one meeting of the church, and *that* in an orderly succession, without interrupting, or interfering with one another: And as there are many false pretenders to the ministry, and to inspiration, let other judicious and inspired prophets, that may be present, examine (*εὐαγγελοῦντες*) every thing that is said in public worship; and let them discern and determine concerning it, whether it be consonant to the tenor of Old Testament prophecies, and New Testament revelation, or not; and so make a difference between those things, that are delivered under divine revelation, or according to the word of God; and those that proceed from a man's own private spirit, or from a spirit of delusion.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that siteth by, let the first hold his peace.

30 But (*ἐκ*) if any important revelation be made to another prophet, that is sitting in the assembly, as a hearer and a judge, and he should thereupon make a signal for audience; Let him that was speaking break off, as soon as he has finished what he is upon, that proper room may be left for this other servant of Christ to deliver the message, which he has received, to be communicated from the Lord.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

31 For though at one meeting there commonly should be no more than two or three speakers in their course; yet there may be proper opportunities enough, at different times of assembling, for all of you, that are under immediate inspiration, (*See the note on ver. 26.*) as well as for all your ordinary ministers, to exercise your gifts of teaching one after another, that the whole church may be regularly instructed in the mind and will of God, for their edification; (*ver. 3.*) and that every one may receive a portion in season, by way of exhortation, or of consolation. (*Παραμύσεις*)

32 And the spirits of the prophets

32 And this may well be done with the utmost order, convenience, and advantage, since the gifts and impulses of the Holy Spirit, even in inspired men, so far accommodate themselves to their rational faculties\*, as

not

#### N O T E.

\*That this is meant of the prophets, who were to speak, and not of those, who were to judge concerning the truth, or falsehood, of what others delivered, appears from its being said, not that the spirits of the prophets ought to be, but really are subject to the prophets; and from the current of the context: For this has a reference to the preceding directions of these prophets to speak, or not, in a proper order, and to give way one to another in due course; and in the verse imme-

diately after this God's being the Author not of confusion, but peace, is mentioned as the reason why the gifts and impulses of the spirit were subject to those, that were endued with them, so as to be able to speak or hold their peace, as occasion required, in opposition to the assaits of evil spirits, which threw their prophets into such ungovernable cessacies, as forced them to speak and do like furies, or persons beside themselves. *W. Grot. in loc.*

phers are subject  
to the prophecies.

not to throw them out of a due government of themselves, like the heathen priests under their diabolical possessions; but to preserve their capacities of uttering themselves, or not, and to give them a judgment of discretion, when, and how long, it is fit for them to speak under his influence; and we may be sure that this divine spirit will not hurry them into any indecencies or improprieties, either as to the matter, manner, or time of their speaking.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

33 For the infinitely wise and holy God, who inspires them with his good spirit, neither is, nor can be, the author, abettor, or encourager, (*αυταίσχυος*) of such a disorderly, unseasonable, and wild management, as has a natural tendency to fling his worship into confusion, and breed disturbances and tumults in the church; But he, as the God of peace and order, is the commander and approver, promoter and author of every thing, that tends to the spiritual prosperity of his people, in a regular, well-governed, and peaceable way, as he is found to be in all other churches, which consist of sanctified believers; and in which his worship is carried on in a sober, decent, and becoming manner; and therefore it may, and ought to be so among you.

34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not

34 As to your women, who are ready to take too much upon them in public ministrations, it behoves them to be hearers, and not speakers in religious assemblies; For it is neither decent nor allowable for them to preach, or act the proper part of the man, in any public way of speaking\*; unless when, on extraordinary

#### N O T E.

\* As *prophecy* or preaching, by an extraordinary gift of the spirit, is the main subject of the preceding verses; that sort of speaking seems, at least, included, if not most directly intended, in what is here forbidden to women; and yet as *Anna*, the prophetess, spoke publicly of Christ in the temple, *Luke ii. 38*; and as, on the famous day of *Pentecost*, God poured out of his spirit upon daughters and handmaids, that they might prophecy, *Acts ii. 18—19*; and accordingly *Philip's* four daughters were said to prophecy, *Acts xxi. 9*. I can scarce think that the apostle meant absolutely to disallow of womens speaking in the church, when they evidently appeared to be under a divine afflatus: But probably there were some women in the church at *Corinth*, that pretended to speak under immediate inspiration, tho', as far as appears, they were not really inspired, and therefore, as the apostle guarded against their unfemale like manner of uttering themselves, under their pretended im-

pulses, in *chap. xi. 5, 6*. (See the note on ver. 3. of that chapter) so he here, without any limitation, forbids their openly speaking in the church in any way, that is peculiar to the office of men; though they might join their voices with men, in singing the praises of God, and saying aloud, *Amen*, as was customary at the end of public prayers; (See the note on *ver. 16.*) and might speak in any way, that did not interfere with the authority of the man. The great difficulty, which so much incumbers the thoughts of commentators on this place, may be chiefly owing to our not having the letter, which the Corinthians wrote to the apostle, about disorderly practices among them, (*chap. vii. 1.*) and which he answered in this epistle, intelligibly enough to those, that were fully acquainted with the subjects of complaint, and the true state of things in that church, but if we admit of the easy supposition, that the preaching women in that church, notwithstanding their pretences,

were

not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

nary occasions, they evidently appear to be under an immediate inspiration of the spirit: In other cases, *I do not suffer them to teach*; 1 Tim. ii. 12.) nor do any other churches of the saints (*ver.* 33.) admit of it; 'tis by no means fit, or proper, or suitable to their sex; but they ought by a modest silence, to shew a *submission to their own husbands, as is fit in the Lord*, (Col. iii. 18.) answerable to the distinction of sexes, which is made by the law of nature, and the law of nations; and as God himself has commanded in that original law, which is contained in the writings of *Moses*, (See the note on *Luke xxiv.* 44.) saying to our mother *Eve*, which is equally binding upon her offspring, *Thy desire shall be to thy husband; and he shall rule over thee.* (Gen. iii. 16.)

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

35 And if any woman do not thoroughly understand what is said, or done in the congregation, and are desirous to be further satisfied about it †, they may seek information in a private way at home, by asking (*τις αρωτα*) *their own* believing husbands, who are supposed to be both able and willing, or at least, may get assistance from others of more knowledge than themselves, to instruct them; For it is very unbecoming, and unsuitable to the modesty of the female sex, that an uninspired woman should take upon herself to discourse, and debate with men, in the public exercises of the church.

36 What? came the word of God out from you

36 What mean then these irregular practices among you, so different from all, that is permitted in any other church? Or what right can your church claim, more than others, of giving unto them? Can ye pretend that your's is the mother-church, and that the gospel of the blessed God was first preached, and all it's ordinances were first instituted among you, and went forth to others from you; and that therefore ye may do just what you please, without regarding what was done among them? No, *the word of the Lord came originally from Jerusalem*, (Isa. ii. 3.) and from thence was communicated to all other churches. Or can ye boast

#### N O T E S.

were not really inspired, the difficulty is relieved; and this passage is better reconciled with chap. xi. 5, 6. than in any other way, that I have met with.

† Here seems to be a reference to the customs of the Jewish worship, in which persons were allowed to ask questions of the preacher, relating to what he had delivered, and in conformity to which, our blessed Lord, at twelve years old, sat with the doctors,

asking them questions, *Luke ii.* 45. But the apostle denies this liberty to women, as favouring too much of putting themselves on a level with men. (See Dr *Lightfoot's* exertations on the place, and on *Luke ii.* 46.) and the apostle directs the women to apply to their own believing husbands, rather than to other men for information, to prevent occasions of scandal from too intimate conversation with others of the contrary sex.

you? or came it unto you only?

boast that, when the gospel reached the *Gentiles*, it was *first*, and *only* imparted to, and received by you; and therefore ye are to be a rule to all others? No, the *Antiochian*, and other churches were favoured with it *besides*, and even *before* you; (*Acts* chap. xi.—xviii.) and therefore ye can challenge no prerogative beyond any of them, but are tied down, as well as they, to the institutions and commandments of Christ, the only king of his church.

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

37 If, after all, there be any one among you, who pretends, or imagines himself to be an inspired prophet; or to be endued with extraordinary gifts of the spirit, and with a clearer and more extensive knowledge of divine things, than others; and therefore thinks that he has authority to give laws to the church\*; Let such an one know, consider, and own, that the directions, which I have wrote concerning these matters, are consonant to the general rules which the Lord Jesus himself laid down in his personal ministry, about public teaching; and are no other than the commandments, which he has further communicated to me and authorized me, as his inspired apostle, to enjoin upon you; and which no one, who is really conducted by his spirit, can deny to be according to his mind and will: Consequently no pretences to inspiration, in setting up practices of a contrary nature, can be of God, and therefore ought not to be allowed by you.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

38 But if there be any among you so wilfully obstinate and perverse, as not to understand, acknowledge, and submit to the authority, which I have received from Christ, and the commands I have delivered from him; Let such an one, at his own peril, persist in his ignorance and contempt: I shall give myself no further trouble to convince him; and ye ought no longer to regard him.

39 Wherefore, brethren, cover to prophecy and for bid not to speak with tongues.

39 Therefore, to conclude all that I have been saying on these points, my advice to you, brethren, is that ye be earnestly desirous of obtaining and exercising the gift of prophecy, as the most excellent in itself, and most profitable to the church, of all others; (*ver. 1—5.*) and yet that ye would not utterly discountenance, and prevent the exercise of the gift of tongues, which may also be of good use in it's place, if it be managed according to the foregoing rules about it.

40 In

#### N O T E.

\* In this and the next verse, as Mr *Lücke* observes, the apostle seems to point at some chief leader of the faction, which had set up

in the church at *Corinth* against him, and against the authority, which Christ had committed to him.

40 Let all things be done decently, and in order.

40 In these, and all things else relating to the worship of God, take heed that it be performed in such a becoming manner, as to avoid all appearance of childishness, (*ver.* 20.) or of phrensy, (*ver.* 22.) or of women's acting out of character, (*ver.* 34, 35.) or of any other indecency \*; and see to it, that the whole be conducted, not according to the devices of men's own heads, under any pretence whatsoever; but according to the commandments now given you from the Lord, (*ver.* 37.) in such a regular course, (*ver.* 27—33. as may prevent confusion, and may put a reputation, instead of a disgrace, upon the blessed and holy name, doctrines, ordinances and ways of Christ; and as may be most for the glory of God, and the edification of the church.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How different is the present settled state of the church, from what the nature of things required it to be in its first plantation, with respect to immediate revelations, and speaking all sort of languages by the Holy Ghost! Nevertheless, how ambitious should we be of those ordinary gifts and graces of the Spirit, which are still as useful as ever, and, like Prophecy and Charity, are edifying to our own and other souls, rather than of showy appearances, which, like the gift of tongues, are in themselves of little advantage! And yet it concerns us to improve every kind of gift for the good purposes for which God bestows them upon us. But how unprofitable is it to preach, or pray in a learned style, above the capacity of common hearers; and how absurd to perform sacred offices in an unknown tongue, and that without interpreting it! Whatever good a man may get to himself, he can do none by such services to those that do not understand him: Nor ought the ministry of the gospel to give an uncertain sound; its great ends are to inform and impress the soul, that what is delivered may be clearly understood, and reach the secrets of the heart, and may gain an Amen of assent and consent, and constrain an acknowledgement in the conscience, that verily God is in the assemblies of his people. How happy is it when we are like little children in malice, and like men in understanding; and when we are wise to sobriety, and all our devotions are under the conduct of the divine Spirit, and of an enlightened, sanctified, and regular mind! What a credit is it to the Christian religion, when all its ordinances are celebrated with due decorum, and in a proper order, according to the word of God, who is not the Author of confusion, but of peace, in the churches of the saints! But how arrogant is it for women so far to forget the modesty of their sex, as to assume the rank of men in public ministrations, or for any church to monopolize the word of God, as if it belonged only to them; or for any persons, under pretence of extraordinary gifts and revelations, or of human authority, to set aside, alter, or add to the commands of God, in things that relate to his worship! May we ever avoid all indecencies and disorders, and all unscriptural management, in our Christian assemblies!

### N O T E.

\* Decently, and in order, plainly relate, not to human inventions of rites and ceremonies, to set off the worship of God: For nothing of that kind is mentioned in the foregoing context; nay, its great design is to decry human authority in those affairs. But the decency and order, here intended, are

such, as were to be deemed the commandments of the Lord, *ver.* 37. with regard to all the foregoing regulations, which the apostle prescribed against the various disorders that had been brought into the church at Corinth.

## C H A P. XV.

*The apostle proves the resurrection of Christ from the dead, 1,—11. Takes occasion from thence to confute those that denied the resurrection of the body, 12,—19. Establishes the doctrine of the resurrection of believers to eternal life by various arguments, 20,—34. Answers objections against it, and shews the vast change that will then be made in the qualities of their risen bodies, 35,—50. Discovers the mystery of the like change, that will be made on those who shall be living at Christ's second coming, 51,—54. Sets forth the believers triumph over death and the grave, 55,—57. And closes the argument with an exhortation and encouragement to all diligence in the service of the Lord, 58.*

## TEXT.

**M**oreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand;

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**S to the disputes that have been raised among you my Christian brethren, about the certainty of a future state, and the resurrection of the body to eternal life \*; I would begin with reminding you of, and establishing you in, the grand fundamental articles of the gospel, concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, (*ver.* 3, 4.) and shall particularly enlarge upon, and confirm the last of these, which supposes the first, both of which, as ye well know, I insisted upon in my ministry, when with you; which ye also then were convinced of, and embraced, as the foundation of all your hope toward God; and in the profession and faith of which, notwithstanding all the efforts of the enemies of your souls, and the corruptions that have crept in among you, the generality of you (See the foregoing note) have hitherto continued to stand fast, (*ver.* 1, 2.) and as I trust, are fully determined, by the grace of God, to abide by, at all events, in every day of trial.

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached

2 And by means of this gospel, and of your faith in it, ye are brought into a state of salvation, and have the beginnings and earnest of it, with the utmost securities for a complete possession in due time of all its felicity and glory; in case as I hope, ye carefully attend to, and affectionately bear in mind, and maintain your holy

## N O T E.

\* As the *Sadducees* denied the resurrection of the body, and the existence of separate spirits, and consequently any future state of rewards and punishments, (*Matth.* xxii. 23. and *Acts* xxiii. 8.) and the *Greek* philosophers were busy with their objections against the resurrection, *Acts* xvii. 18, 32.) so some of the *Jewish* converts seem to have been intangled with the notions of the *Sadducees*,

and some of the *Gentile* converts with the philosophical speculations of the *Greeks*: The apostle therefore sets himself to confute the errors of both, about this important point, with admirable force and beauty, and with a variety of striking arguments, and magnificent figures and eloquence, as they are finely described by Mr *Blackhall*, in his *Sacred classet*, vol. i. pag. 355, 356.

ed unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

holy profession of, those vastly important things which I delivered in my preaching to you: And this ye certainly have done, and will persevere in, unless your belief, of them were only notional, or were (*κεκαυ*) rash and inconsiderate \*, under the power of strong passions without any solid judgment or suitable influence upon your hearts and lives; and so were a dead faith, which cannot save you. (*Jam. ii. 14, 17.*)

3 For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures:

3 For as I faithfully communicated to you every important branch of the gospel of Christ; so in the very first place, as what holds the chief rank among its principal articles, (*ἡ ἀποστολή*) I delivered unto you, as a sacred trust and treasure to be kept inviolably, those blessed doctrines, which I received by immediate commission and revelation from Jesus Christ himself, (*Gal. i. 12.*) as the foundation of all the rest; namely that our dear and only Saviour died in our room and stead, the just for the unjust, to expiate our sins, and put them away by the sacrifice of himself: (*1 Pet. iii. 18. and Heb. ix. 26.*) And thus he did, according to the current types and prophecies of the antient inspired writings which spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, (*Luke. xxiv. 25, 26, 27. and 1 Pet. i. 11.*) and which being actually fulfilled in our Lord, are a mighty satisfaction to our faith in him, according to those remarkable predictions of him in *Isa. liii. 5, 6, 11. and Dan. ix. 24, 26.*

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures:

4 I likewise shewed you that, in certain testimony of his having been really dead, he was buried in the sepulchre of *Joseph of Arimathea*; an honourable counsellor, (*Mark xv. 43, 46.*) according to the prophecy, that he should *make his grave with the rich in his death*, (*Isa. liii. 9.*) and that as he *was delivered for our offences*, he was *raised again for our justification*, (*Rom. iv. 25.*) according to other prophecies of the Old Testament, *Psal. xvi. 10. and Isa. liii. 8*; and that this was on the third day, (*Luke xxiv. 46.*) according to the figurative representation of it, by *Jonah's* having been in the belly of the fish three days and three nights (*John i. 17.*) which was typical of the resurrection of Christ on the third day, as he himself interpreted and applied it; (*Matth. xii. 40.* See the note there) and according to another figurative way of expressing the deli-

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\* The word (*κεκαυ*) here rendered in *vain*, signifies also *rash* and *inconsiderate*, and is different in the Greek from two other words that are used in this discourse; and translated in the same manner; one is (*κεκαυ*) in ver. 10,

14, 18. which signifies *empty*, as well as *vain*; and the other is (*καταυ*) in ver. 17. which signifies *foolish*, and *destitute of any real advantage, or goodness*, as well as *vain*.



deliverance of *Judah and Israel*, which carried a typical hint \*, that *after two days* their promised head and saviour *should be revived, and on the third day should be raised up.* (Hos. vi. 2.)

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

5 And to assure us that, in fact, these types and prophecies were fulfilled in the resurrection of our blessed Lord, which is a farther confirmation of his being the true Messiah, I told you that he had been seen alive, at various times, after his crucifixion and burial, for forty days of his abode upon earth, by a great number of honest, competent, and unexceptionable witnesses, (*Acts* i. 3.) who could not be deceived themselves, nor be under any temptation to endeavour the deceiving of others, by forging and standing to a falsehood of that nature, which they knew would infallibly bring them under the greatest reproaches and sufferings: As to instance in some, out of many witnesses †, Jesus on the very day of his resurrection, appeared to the apostle Peter; (*Luke* xxiv. 34.) and presently after that on the same day, which was the first day of the week, to ten of his apostles, to whom he shewed his hands and his side, with all the scars of his crucifixion upon them; (*John* xx. 19, 20, 24.) and that day sevennight to all the apostles, (*John* xx. 26—29.) whose original number was twelve ‡.

6 After

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\* As it was in no sense *literally*, or in prophetic language, true, that *Judah and Israel*, to whom this prophecy primarily referred, were revived, or delivered from their captivities and troubles, on the *third day*, we may well consider this prophecy, as intended to have an ultimate reference to the resurrection of Christ, as the public head of the church, which might be said to be *raised up together* IN HIM, (*Eph.* ii. 6.) And though this sense of the prophecy might not be well understood, as many others were not, till they were accomplished; yet it became easily applicable to Christ, when the events shewed that he, and he only, rose from the dead on the third day. See *Poole* on *Hos.* vi. 2.

† The apostle does not recite all the instances, recorded by the evangelists, of Christ's shewing himself to his disciples, such as his appearing to *Mary Magdalen* at the sepulchre, and the disciples at the sea of *Tiberias*, (*John* xx. 14, 21. and *xxi.* 1.) and others. But he takes notice of some, which none of the evangelists have expressly mentioned, as particularly *that to James*, and another to *five hundred brethren at once*, (*ver.* 6, 7.) which may be as fully depended upon as the other, because they are recorded by this inspired writer; and those, that he has alledged were

abundantly sufficient to prove his point; though doubtless there were several other times of Christ's appearing to his disciples, during his forty days abode upon earth, which neither the apostle, nor any of the evangelists have rehearsed, as not thinking them necessary to answer their end; and we are told, *John* xx. 30. and *xxi.* 25. that *many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in that history*; and that if *all the things which Jesus did, were written, the world could not contain the books.* See the note there.

‡ It is no uncommon thing for a society, body, or college of men, to retain their original name, when one, or more of them be absent or dead. *Jacob's* sons called themselves *twelve brethren*, after they supposed that *Joseph* was lost, or dead, *Gen.* xlii. 13, 32. The *Trinuviri, Septemviri, and Decemviri* among the *Romans*, were respectively so called, whether they were all living, or were present in their assemblies or not: And we commonly speak of points of law being referred to the *twelve judges*, though several of them may be absent, and some of them dead. In like manner, Christ having originally appointed *twelve apostles*, to be in a peculiar and extraordinary manner his witnesses, they

6 After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

6 After this, according to our Lord's own appointment of a rendezvous of his disciples, to meet him in *Galilee*, (*Mark* xvi. 68. and xvi. 7.) † he shewed himself alive to a great multitude of them at once amounting to upwards of five hundred Christian brethren who believed in him, as their risen Saviour; the major part of whom are still living to vouch the truth of that appearance; but some of them who testified the same all their days, are now dead and gone, and sleep in Jesus, among those, whom God will bring to be glorified with him at the general resurrection. (*1 Thess.* iv. 14.)

7 He was furthermore seen, on a particular occasion by the apostle *James* ‡, who was styled the brother of our Lord, as being nearly related to him, according to the flesh; (*Gal.* i. 19.) and afterwards he appeared again, for the last time, in a most remarkable manner to all his apostles ||, when he gathered them together to be eye witnesses of his ascension to heaven. (*Luke* xxiv. 51, 52. and *Acts* i. 9, 10. see the note on the last of these places.)

8 And after all these repeated, and undoubted appearances of the risen Saviour to his disciples on earth, he, several years after his ascension, personally appeared, in an extraordinary manner, to me, (*Acts* xxii. 17, 18.) that I might have the peculiar privilege, honour, and qualification of an apostle, as an eye witness of his being risen from the dead; (see the notes on *Acts* ix. 17. and *Rom.* i. 1.) though I had not the happiness of being his disciple, and seeing him in his risen state upon

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were called by that name after *Judas* was dead, and before *Matthias* was chosen in his place, to make up the number again. (*John* xx. 24.) Yea, and they continued to be spoken of as twelve, after *Paul* and *Barnabas* were added to their number, *Rev.* xxi. 14.

† It is most probable, that this public appearance of our blessed Lord to all these disciples, was in *Galilee*, where he had appointed to meet them, *Matth.* xxviii. 16. (See the note there.) And that this appointment related to the general body of his disciples, as well as to the apostles, may be fairly concluded, because the greatest number of his disciples were in that country; and because he made two visits, at least, to his apostles in a body, before they went to *Galilee*, *John* xx. 19, 26.

‡ Which *James* this was, and where, or on what occasion this visit was made to him, we are not told in the sacred writings; but early antiquity says, it was *James the Less*,

who was also called *the Just*; and the brother of our Lord. He is supposed to have been the first cousin, and so called the brother of our Lord, according to the Hebrew custom, as he was the son of *Cleophas*, or *Alpheus*, (*Matth.* x. 3.) the brother of the virgin *Mary*. (*John* xix. 25.) And his being surnamed *the Just*, was on account of his great sanctity, and mortified life. See the note on *Matth.* xii. 46. and *Universal history*, vol. iv. p. 256.

|| Perhaps, by all the apostles, may be meant, not only those that were strictly so styled, but also the seventy disciples, who might be called apostles in a lax sense, as our Lord (*ἀποστόλους αὐτοὺς*) sent them forth with an immediate commission to preach the gospel, *Luke* x. 1. If so, the persons here mentioned are more than the twelve spoken of, ver. 5. But if not, this being the last and most famous appearance of Christ to the apostles, deserved a particular record, and was of vast importance to the argument in hand.

pon earth ; but was converted, and called to the apostleship out of the ordinary course, by a sort of untimely, like an abortive birth \*.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

9 For how much soever I be now enriched, and advanced in gifts and graces, and in the honours of the apostolate ; and how eminent and successful soever my labours, and sufferings have been in the execution of that office, I really am in myself, and in my own account, the very least, and most contemptible of all the apostles of Christ ; yea, *less than the least of all Saints*, (Eph. iii. 8.) utterly unworthy of any favour, much more of so high and honourable a station in the church, Nay, on the contrary, I justly deserved to have had an eternal brand of infamy set upon me ; because I was all along, in the days of my unregeneracy, and blind zeal for *Judaism*, a most obstinate unbeliever, and a most bitter enemy to, and outrageous persecutor of the church (Acts. viii. 3. and ix. 1.) which God has erected as a peculiar people to himself, and which he owns and blesses, and will be glorified in, and by.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am : and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly

10 But in the happy alteration, that is now made upon me, it is merely owing to the sovereign, free, and amazing favour of God, that I, who was before *an injurious person*, a blasphemer and persecutor, and on these accounts *the chief of sinners*, have obtained mercy ; (1 Tim. i. 13—15.) and that I am what I now am, as a believer, and as an apostle, so enriched in my own soul and so graciously qualified for his service : (2 Cor. i. 4. 5. and xi. 5.) and the gift, fruit, or effect of God's grace, which he extended to me, (*or was*) and conferred upon me, was not useless, unprofitable, and vain ; (*or was vain*) but it wrought mightily in me, so that under a sense of his wondrous love, I laid out myself, and all my gifts and graces, in ministerial labours for Christ and his cause, and for the good of souls, more extensively, and with greater unweariedness, amidst dangers, hardships, and sufferings, among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, than any one of all the other apostles. (Rom. xv. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. and xi. 23. and xii. 11.) nevertheless, (though I thus speak, to support my character against those that run it down) I would by no means take any praise to myself, as if I now deserved it, more than others ;

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\* *Born out of due time*, (*or* *αποκαταστασις*) may be called an *abortive birth*, as it was all on a sudden, at unawares, with terrible pangs, and in a way very unlike the other apostles, who were wrought upon in the more usual method of divine grace, and were gradually trained up to their office by personal

attendance on Christ, while he was with them : And on these accounts, especially considering what a wretch the apostle had been before, he thought himself to be as despicable as an abortive birth, and always remembered it to keep him humble.

abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed,

12 Now, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.

thers; no, it was not of myself, or from any excellency of my own, that I thus abundantly laboured; but it was all owing to the continued influence of assisting grace, which attended me, to excite me to it, enable me for it, and succeed me in it\*; and therefore my obligation is the greater, to glory only in the Lord.

11 To return then from this digression concerning myself, and wind up my argument about the death and resurrection of Christ, (*ver. 3, 4.*) whether I, or Peter, or any other of Christ's apostles and witnesses communicated the gospel to you, and were the instruments of your conversion and edification, we all agree in preaching one and the same doctrine of a crucified and risen Redeemer, as the foundation of the whole scheme of the gospel; and ye professed to approve of, consent to and receive it, and to depend upon Christ alone, according to it, for all salvation, as I trust ye also did in sincerity and truth; and as ye must and will continue to do unless ye have believed in vain. (*ver. 2.*)

12 Now if Christ be preached, with all this uncontrollable evidence of certainty, (*ver. 5—8.*) that he, who was crucified unto death, is risen again, and that as the head of the church, to an immortal and glorious life, according to the scriptures; (*ver. 3, 4.*) and if this is what ye yourselves believed; (*ver. 11.*) How absurd is it for any of you, or what room can there be for any false teachers, that have rose up among you and pretend to bear the Christian name, to assert† that there neither is, nor can be, a real and proper resurrection of dead bodies to eternal life?

13 But if there really be no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, then it must be affirmed, directly contrary to the plainest matter of fact, that Christ himself is not risen from the dead; since, if he is actually risen

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\* Grace is three times mentioned in this verse; but seems to carry a different sense in each of them. In the *first*, it signifies the free love and favour of God, as the original source of all spiritual and living benefits, according to the primary and most usual acceptation of the word: In the *second*, I take it to mean the effects of his favour, in the gifts and graces of the Spirit, as in *Eph. iv. 7.* and *1 Pet. iii. 18.* And in the *third*, it may import those *continued aids and assistances* of divine grace, that were with the apostle to excite and enable him to improve what it had bestowed upon him, to the glory of God, and the good of the church, and that were sufficient for him, according to *2 Cor. i. 12.* and *xii. 9.*

† The words, *some of you, or some among you,* (*τινὲς ὑμῶν*) may refer either to some

of the Corinthian church, or to some of their new teachers, that had come among them; and their notion seems to have been, that a resurrection is impossible; or that if Christ rose, it was not in a public capacity: Without the last of these suppositions, the apostle's argument for the resurrection of others, from Christ's being actually risen, is inconclusive; since it was possible that he might rise from the dead, though no other person were to rise besides him. I have therefore considered the argument, in the following verses, under both these views, agreeable to his grand design, which is to prove the possibility, and the certainty of a resurrection to eternal life, and that Christ rose, as the head and first-fruit of believers. See the note on *ver. 22.*

risen, it must be absolutely false, that there is no resurrection; and if there shall be no resurrection of others to eternal life, then it is certain that Christ did not rise as a public head, or as the earnest and pledge, pattern, cause, and *first-fruit of them that sleep in him.* (ver. 20.)

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

14 And if Christ be not actually risen, and that as a public person, then all that we his apostles, and multitudes of others, (ver. 6.) say about it, and all that we build, in our preaching, upon it; and indeed the whole gospel of salvation, which we deliver, is (xiii) mere empty, idle talk, without truth or foundation and not worth regarding; and even your own faith in him, who, according to that notion, is himself supposed to be overcome by death, is insignificant and ineffectual, (xiv) a poor empty conceit, that has nothing in it, but must be frustrated at last.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God; that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

15 Nay, on this supposition, we, who unanimously declare, that we have seen him alive after his passion; we, who cheerfully stand to it, at the hazard of all that is dear to us in this world, and even of life itself, and without any prospect of happiness hereafter, if what we say is false; we, who have always maintained an approved character for integrity and honesty; all, and every one of us, must be deemed, and stand convicted as the most impious and abandoned wretches, that have forged a lie for God, and knowingly published a downright falshood in his name; because we have witnessed concerning God, (xv) and professed to do it from him, by his authority, in obedience to his command, and with divine miracles to confirm our testimony that he loosed the pains of death, and raised Christ up to a glorious and immortal life, in token of his having accepted of his sufferings and death, as an atoning sacrifice for sin: Whereas he, in reality, did not raise up Christ from the dead, in case a true and proper resurrection of the body he in itself impossible; nor did he raise him up in a public character, as the head of the church, if his members are not to rise after him, and in virtue of his resurrection.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

16 For it is manifest, as I said but now, (ver. 13.) that if there be no resurrection of the dead at all, and no other persons are to rise to eternal life, it must inevitably follow, that Christ himself neither is, nor could be raised, either in a private, or public capacity.

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain

17 And if it were true, that Christ still continues under the power of death, all your own faith in him is not only insignificant and empty, as has been observed,

vain; yet are yet  
in your sins.

(*ver.* 14.) but it is also (*κατανα*) a foolish thing in you, as foolish as the unbelieving *Greeks* themselves can account it, (*chap.* i. 23.) to expect any benefit from his crucifixion, or from any part of the Christian scheme which is founded upon it: Whatever ye may flatter yourselves with the hopes of from him, ye are still under the guilt and power of your sins, condemned and exposed to the eternal wrath of God for them; since they could not be taken away by the sacrifice of Christ, could not be pardoned through faith in his blood, nor subdued through his merit; unless, having satisfied divine justice by his death, he rose again for your justification. (*Rom.* iv. 21.)

18 Then they  
all, which are  
fallen asleep in  
Christ are perish-  
ed.

18 The dreadful consequence of this must also be, that those, who not only lived; but died in the faith of Christ, in the nearest union with him, and in the hope of eternal life through him, and even suffered martyrdom for his sake; and whose bodies sleep in the grave under his special care, and with peculiar relation to him; all these are perishing without remedy, and for ever lost, and disappointed of their hopes in, and from him\*: A most shocking thought, and the greatest discouragement imaginable to all survivors from putting any further trust or confidence in him!

19 If in this  
life only we have  
hope in Christ,  
we are of all men  
most miserable.

19 For if, after all that we have believed concerning Christ, and all the dependence we have had on him, and all the self-denials, mortifications, persecutions, and sufferings we have submitted to for his sake; if after all this, and even while we are enduring these hardships, we have no prospect of happiness, nor shall ever receive any benefit from Christ, beyond the present life we Christians, and especially we ministers of the gospel who are most of all exposed to every kind of tribulation torture, and death on his account, must be in the most wretched condition of all men whatsoever, and ought to be pined as the most silly and deluded creatures on the face of the earth; since on that supposition we part with many conveniences, delights, and advantages of this life, which we might otherwise enjoy; and yet have nothing substantial or real, in their stead, at present, nor can have any after recompense for all the losses

#### N O T E.

\* The nature of the apostle's argument in several parts of this chapter, and particularly in this verse to the 14th, leads us to understand him as speaking against the *Sadducean* notion (*Acts* xxi. 8.) of the non-existence of spirits, and of a future state of happiness, as well as against their and the *Greek* philosophers denial of the resurrection of

the body; For otherwise there might be a happiness to the *soul* in the next world, abundantly sufficient to compensate for all the tribulations that believers suffer in the body, for the sake of Christ, in this world; and so they might not be of all men most miserable, even though the body were not to rise again. (See also the note on *1 Macc.* xii. 31.)

ses and troubles, which we might easily have avoided were it not for our conscientious attachment to Christ and his gospel.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

20 But there is not the least room for any of these formidable suppositions, and inferences from them; since it is certain, as has been fully proved, (*ver.* 3—8.) that Christ is now actually risen, in consequence of his having died, and satisfied for our sins: and so, as *the first-born*, and *first-begotten from the dead*, and *the first-born among many brethren*, (*Col.* i. 18. and *Rev.* i. 5. and *Rom.* viii. 29.) he is not only the first in order of *time*\*, that rose to immortal life, never to die any more, (*Acts* xiii. 34.) in the *chief in dignity*, who, as the head of the church, rose by his own power; he is also become the *earnest, pledge and insurance* of a consequent resurrection of all those to eternal life, who have departed in the faith†, and whose bodies keep in a state of union with him; (*ver.* 18.) even as the first-fruits under the law, (*Lev.* xxiii. 9—14.) that were dedicated to, and accepted of God, sanctified the whole harvest, and were a pledge and assurance of its being blessed and gathered, in its season. (See the notes on *Rom.* viii. 23. and xi. 16.)

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

21 For because, (*עוֹלָם יָמָיו*) by one man's eating the forbidden fruit, (*Gen.* ii. 17.) Death and ruin were brought upon the whole human race, inclusive of God's own chosen people, they being *by nature, children of wrath, even as others*; (*Eph.* ii. 3.) therefore God in his infinite wisdom, and grace has ordered, that a resurrection to eternal life should also be brought in, by Jesus Christ, to all believers in him, who, though *the Lord from heaven*, (*ver.* 47.) was nevertheless truly and properly man, that a blessed immortality might be regained by the very nature, which had sinned it away.

22 For as in Adam all die, even

22 For as by the sin of the first *Adam*, in whom all his natural offspring were comprehended, as in their common

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\* Those that were raised by *Elijah* and *Elisha* and by our Lord himself, in the days of his ministry on earth, died again, and so were no instances of a resurrection to eternal life; and whatever became of the bodies of those saints, that rose and came out of their graves consequent to his death, and went into the holy city, we are told, that this astonishing event was *after* Christ's resurrection. *Math.* xxvii. 52, 53.

† This manifestly relates only to the resurrection of believers, of whom Christ is the *first-fruit*, and who are spoken of, *ver.* 12.

19. as those that are fallen asleep in Christ, and have hope in him. And these are said (*1 Thes.* iv. 13, 14.) to *sleep in Jesus*, in opposition to those, of whom there is *no hope*. Sleeping is a soft-term for death, and is most frequently used to express the death of *believers*, though sometimes of *men* in general, because the whole human race shall have an awaking time, *Dan.* xii. 2. But the death of no other creatures, is ever described by *sleeping*, because they die never to awake again; and so this notion of death carries a hint of the resurrection of the body.

even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

common parent and covenant head, every one of them, are brought under the law of mortality, and subjected to all miseries and death, even unto the loss of the eternal happiness, which they otherwise would have enjoyed; (*Rom. v. 12, 14, 21.* see the notes there) so, by another covenant constitution, not only the souls of all true believers in Christ, that are partakers of a spiritual nature from him, shall live for ever \*; but every one of their dead bodies also, shall be quickened to an immortal life of glory and blessedness, through the merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection, and by his spirit which dwells in them, (*Rom. viii. 19.*) in virtue of their union with him, and being comprehended in him, that they may reign in life by him. (*Rom. v. 17.*)

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christs at his coming.

23 But every one, (*ἕκαστος*) Christ and each of his members, is, or shall be partaker of this glorious benefit in the time, season, rank, and order, that is fit and proper for them respectively; Christ himself, who is to be considered as the *first-fruit*, which always preceded the full harvest, is already risen as a public head, representative, and pattern, to insure the future resurrection of all his members; and, when he shall come to judgment at the last day, those that were given of the Father to him, and are his special property, redeemed by his blood, and implanted by faith into him, all these shall also be raised, after his glorious likeness and example, to be for ever with him, (*Phil. iii. 21.* and *1 Thess. iv. 14, &c.*)

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the

24 Then shall be the end of this world, and of all the vicissitudes, temptations, sins, and sorrows, that believers now groan under; as also the end of all those ordinances, and means of grace, and ministerial assistances of men and angels, which they now stand in need of; and then shall be (*ἡ τέλος*) the consummation of the present mode of Christ's administering the affairs of providence and grace, in this sinful world, as also the perfection of the happiness of the saints; and so the

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\* The *all*, that shall be made alive in Christ, cannot mean all the individuals of mankind; because the resurrection, all along here spoken of, is represented as an exceeding great benefit, which the resurrection of the wicked cannot be supposed to be to them; and, in the very next verse, it is interpreted, as relating only to those that are Christ's, and of whom he is the *first fruit*, as he had been called also, ver. 20. (See the notes on that verse) Accordingly the whole current of the following discourse shews, that the apo-

stle speaks only of a resurrection to a blessed and glorious immortality, which is expressed in a variety of the strongest terms; and is illustrated in a declaration, that thereby is brought to pass that saying, death is swallowed up in victory; and in a joyful triumph over death and the grave; ver. 42—57. neither of which can be applied to the wicked by any considering mind. But all doing in Adam, evidently shews, that they all sinned in him, *Rom. v. 12.*



the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.

the joyful end will come, which they are looking, longing, and hoping for; And then our Lord Jesus, as man and mediator, having fully executed the whole scheme of his dispensatory kingdom \*, for which all power was given to him after his resurrection, (*Matth. xxviii. 18. and Phil. ii. 9, &c.*) will deliver up (*παράσσει*) his commission, trust, and charge, to God the Father, from whom he received it; and will present all his members together as a glorious church. (*Eph. v. 27.*) All this he will do after he shall have abolished every form of civil and ecclesiastical government, as they now subsist in this world, and all the authority and power, that either men or devils have usurped and exercised over their respective subjects, and in opposition to him, and to his people and cause.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

25 For, according to the decree, promise, and commission of God the Father, and his agreement with the Son, (*Psal. cx. 1.*) he in his human nature, and office capacity, must needs continue to sit in majesty and glory at the Father's right hand, and to reign, as a king upon his throne, in the exercise of universal dominion over all persons, causes, and things, until his Father (*ver. 27.*) shall have thoroughly performed his engagement to him, of bringing down all his, and his churches enemies, both temporal and spiritual of every kind, and shall have placed them in absolute and actual subjection to him, like captives of war, that are trampled under the conqueror's feet.

26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

26 And as the last enemy, that believers have to grapple with, and are often most afraid of, but after which they have nothing farther to fear, is *death*, which separates their bodies from their souls, and from an enjoyment of Christ in all his glory; *this* shall be entirely overcome and abolished, that it may not always reign over them, or detain them under its power, and hinder the complete felicity of their whole persons; but this can be in no other way, than by raising their dead bodies to an immortal life.

27 For he hath put all things un-

27 Christ, I say, must reign in his mediatorial kingdom, till this, and all other enemies be entirely subdued

#### N O T E.

† Christ's delivering up the kingdom to God the Father, no more proves that he will in all respects cease to be a King, or to have any further reign or dominion, than the Father's delivering the kingdom to the Son, proves that the Father himself then ceased to be a King, and parted with his own rule and dominion over all. Vid. *Par. in loc.* Christ's natural and essential kingdom, which he has in common with the Father and Spirit, as God, will

have no end; and he, in his human nature, will wear the honour of his office, and of all his mediatorial performances, and of their secure and abiding effects and consequences; and will live in a state of superior authority and glory, like the head of the church, for ever and ever; and therefore in these respects, his throne and kingdom shall never pass away, or be destroyed. *Dan. vii. 14. Luke i. 33. Heb. i. 8. and Rev. xi. 15.*

der his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

dued: For God the Father made a universal grant of all things to be subjected to him, and has given *him to be the head over all things to the church.* (Eph. i. 22.) But when he speaks, by *David*, (Psal. viii. 6.) with an ultimate reference to his incarnate Son, (Heb. ii. 8.) of all things universally, as placed under his empire and controul, it is evident from the nature of things, and from the context of the passage so quoted, that *all things* mean only all *creatures*; and that the Father himself, who delegated this power and authority to him, as his vicegerent in human nature, is to be excepted out of the number of those all things, that are put under him.

28 And when the whole design of this commitment of all office power to him shall be fully accomplished, and the dispensatory kingdom shall be brought to its period, as having attained all its special ends and purposes, in the actual, complete, and final conquest of all his, and his church's enemies, and in the gathering of all the elect into his kingdom, as a willing people, that, in the day of his power, voluntarily subjected themselves to him; (Psal. cx. 3.) then also the Son, as the constituted Mediator, and ruler over all, shall resign up his office-government, in all the forms of its present administration, and in that peculiar capacity, in which he assumed and exercised it; and as there will then be no further need of his interposing, after the manner he now doth, in the mediatorial way, he will also surrender up himself together with the whole church, to the Father's disposal, with respect to the whole honours that he shall wear, as man and the head of the body, and with respect to all the blessedness, which they shall eternally enjoy, and be confirmed in, with and under him, in virtue of, and in recompence for all the services and sufferings, which he fulfilled in the execution of his commission; that all things, on the foot of his finished mediation, may turn to their original and natural order, in which, not the Father singly and alone \*;

but

#### N O T E.

\* As it cannot be supposed, that the Father divested himself of all his authority and influence, when the immediate management of them was committed to the incarnate Son, as Mediator and Head of the church: so it is not to be supposed in any consilience with the rights of deity, that the Son and Spirit, as God together with the Father, shall have no share or partnership with him in the government of all things, and in the emanations of blessedness in the heavenly state, when the present administration of affairs

shall be delivered up by the Son, which, in his office capacity, according to a settled economy for a certain season, he received all his authority for, from the Father: Accordingly it is very observable, that though the apostle had expressly mentioned *God even the Father*, as the person to whom Christ gave up the kingdom, which he received from him, (ver. 24. See the note there) yet he here speaks of *God absolutely*, without the personal restriction, as *all in all*.

but God *essentially* considered, inclusive of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and of all the perfections of the Godhead, which are common to the sacred Three, will be the immediate fountain of dominion, and of all divine emanations and communications of glory and blessedness to all the saints, and to the man Christ Jesus himself, at the head of them; and will manage all the affairs of his heavenly kingdom, in a more immediate way, from henceforth for ever.

29 *Else what shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*

29 But, to return to the main argument in hand, the denial of a future state of happiness, and of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints to eternal life, (See the note on *ver.* 18.) subverts all the good purposes of your Christian profession, which ye entered into by baptism: For what will become of those believers, who are baptized in the name of Christ, on account of the hope they have, through him, of a blessed resurrection, after they themselves shall be numbered among the dead, and who are the rather induced thereto, by what they have seen, or heard of the faith, patience and Christian heroism of those saints and martyrs, that have died triumphantly in full assurance of such a resurrection? If in reality there be no rising again to eternal life, to what purpose are they baptized for the sake of this hope, and of this further inducement, relating to the dead \*? Or, on this supposition, what good end can be answered to them by their being baptized, and so becoming professed Christians, in the stead of those believers, that are dead and gone? It is all an insignificant, trifling and fruitless thing.

30 *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?*

30 And if there be no ground of hope, but that we die never to live more, How weak and senseless is it for us christians, and especially for us the apostles and ministers of Christ, to expose ourselves continually to the greatest losses, hazards, and tribulations for his sake, and in hope of living with him in glory?

31 *As*

#### N O T E S.

\* There are so many intricate and perplexed interpretations given of this very difficult and obscure passage, which may be seen in the generality of expositors, and are examined at large in Dr *Edwards's* enquiry into four difficult texts, pag. 137—208: and in *Fortuna Sacra*, pag. 137—180, that I think it would answer no valuable end, to trouble the reader with them: The views, I have given of it in the Paraphrase, seem to me to be the most natural, and unexceptionable, of any that I have met with, in full confidence with the sense of the *preposition*, (*υπερ*) which signifies *because*, or *by reason of*, or *for the*

*sake of*, as in 2 *Cor.* xii. 10. *Phil.* i. 12. *Col.* i. 12. and 2 *Thes.* i. 5. and at others, in the *stead of*, as in 1 *Cor.* v. 20. and *Philem.* *ver.* 13. Or, perhaps, the sense may be this, If the dead rise not, what will become of those infants of believing parents that are baptized for their sakes, after they were dead, by virtue of their covenant privileges which they were entitled to, though their parents died before they were baptized, and so it is somewhat like Christ's argument, from the covenant with *Abraham*, for the resurrection. *Matth.* xxii. 31, 32.

31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

31 As to my own part, I solemnly declare, and am not ashamed to own, that as surely as I rejoice with you in all the joy which ye have in Christ, our only Lord and Saviour, and in the success of of my ministry, by means of which ye have been brought to rejoice in him \*; and as surely as the Holy Spirit lives, who is the author of all this joy; so I stand ready, and expect every day, to suffer all the miseries and tortures, that can be inflicted on me, even unto death itself, in hope of a blessed resurrection; I am, in this view, weaned from life, and often familiarize to myself the thoughts of dying; and scarce a day passes, in which I am not in danger of suffering martyrdom for Christ, (*Acts* xxiii. 6. and xxiv. 21. 2. *Cor.* iv. 11, 12. and xi. 23).

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat

32 And if, according to the custom of men now-a-days, who throw condemned criminals to the wild and ravenous beasts at *Ephesus*, to be devoured, or to contend with them for victory, I have been exposed to the most terrible and dangerous conflicts with savage and brutal enemies, in the outrageous troubles that have befallen me there, as well as elsewhere, for the sake of Christ, What a rash and foolish part have I acted†; Or were I to be actually exposed, for my religion, to the wild beasts upon the theatre at *Ephesus*, which I am prepared for, if it be the will of God, what possible benefit could I promise myself, or expect to reap, from such an extremely shocking and perilous adventure, if in reality there is no life after this, and no resurrection to a better state? (See the notes on *ver.* 19, and 22.) If this indeed were the case, then e'en let you and I, and all others that profess the faith of Christ

#### N O T E S.

\* As I protest by your rejoicing (*Νοτῶν ὑμῶν χαρῶν*) is a sort of solemn oath; if we conceive of it in this form, it naturally leads us to consider the apostle as swearing by the Holy Ghost, the author of this joy.

† Some suppose that the apostle was actually engaged in combating with wild beasts in the theatre at *Ephesus*; others, that he was condemned to it, or in danger of it, though he escaped it: and others, that he only had conflicts with persons of as fierce and furious a temper, as wild beasts. But, not being certain which might be the truth of the case, I have left it undetermined. The curious reader may consult, on the first state of the question, Dr *Whitby*; on the second, Dr *Hammond*; and on the third, the learned *Gratius*. Mr *Pyle* makes the construction of, if I have fought (*εἰ κούνησα μύσας*) to be if I had fought with beasts at *Ephesus*, according

to the latitude of the tense, so natural to the Hebrew and Hellenistic languages; and this, as he observes, saves the critics all their needless pains of recurring to another light, and miraculous deliverance of St Paul at *Ephesus* grounded only on certain traditions, and he thinks it shews this passage plainly to refer to, *Acts* xix. 30, 31. Accordingly I have drawn this sense into the paraphrase; though as *Acts* xix. 30, 31. relates to what is generally thought to have been done, after the writing of this epistle, I should rather choose to make what is here said to refer to some former troubles, that the apostle met with at *Ephesus*, which he may be supposed to include, among others, in the troubles which came on him in Asia, even to the despairing of life. 2 *Cor.* i. 8, 9. See also Bishop *Fell's* Oxford notes on this 3d verse.

eat and drink, for  
to-morrow we die.

Christ, lay aside all further thoughts of running any risk, or suffering any troubles, on account of religion; and let us, like the *Epicurean* part of the world, and according to their licentious maxims indulge ourselves in eating and drinking, and in all sensual pleasures, as long as we can! For, upon this supposition, we in a very little time, perhaps before to-morrow, must die like the brute, and there is an end of us for ever.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

33 But take heed of being cheated, and imposed upon, by artful and designing seducers, that would draw you into such pernicious errors, as are subversive, not only of the foundations of Christianity, but of all morality too: Remember that frequency, familiarity, and intimacy of conversation with men of such a perverse, atheistical and luxurious turn, have a sad tendency and influence, to corrupt your minds and morals, by insensibly moulding them into their own temper and ways, to the destruction of all that is virtuous and religious, and of all that is really good for this world, and especially for that to come.

34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

34 Be sober then, (*ἐν νουθεσίᾳ*) and rouse up, as ye ought, all the reasonable powers, and gracious principles of your souls, to judge (*δικαιοῦντες*) righteously and truly, concerning the important point I am speaking of, and to live in a just and holy manner, according to it; and take heed of being led into gross mistakes, and sinful practices, as their consequence, by the error of the wicked: For as I perceive by the objections, that have been made against the doctrine of a resurrection to eternal life, and by the spirit, with which they are urged, there are some false teachers among you, that are strangers to the true knowledge of God and his perfections, and of his mind and will, according to the gospel revelation; and that either do, or would live, as if they had no notion at all of a divine being, and a future state. This is really a horrid disgrace to any that bear the Christian name; and I mention it as a matter of just reproach upon your new teachers, and with a hope of bringing those of you to an ingenuous humbling sense of the shameful part ye have acted, who have given them any countenance or encouragement so directly contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel of Christ, which ye have professed to believe, and build all your hopes upon. I heartily wish, that both one and the other may take shame to themselves before God in their reflexions upon it.

35 But some man will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.

35 But some, to puzzle the cause, and load it with pretended absurdities, will object, How, or by what means, is it possible for dead bodies to rise again to life, after they have rotted in the grave, and their dust is scattered about, and intermingled with that of many other bodies \*? Or, if it should be supposed a possible thing, With what sort of bodies will they come forth alive out of their graves? Shall it be with such animal, earthly, and frail bodies as they now are? Or shall it be with any other shape and capacities! What form can any one imagine them to be raised in, which may make them fit for a supposed reunion with glorified souls that they may be agreeable and advantageous, and not a clog and hindrance to them, as they are in the present state, in which the soul is embarrassed, and as it were buried in the body.

36 Whosoever he be that would overthrow this important doctrine, by raising difficulties about it, which he thinks cannot be answered, whether he be a free-thinking *Sadducee*, or a *Gentile* philosopher, I would say to him \*, Thou inconsistent rationalist, and foolish philosopher, you not only *err*, as *not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God*; (Matth. xxii. 29.) but you act a very irrational part in setting up your own understanding against the wisdom and power of God; in not attending to what common observation, and philosophy itself might suggest to you; and in objecting as though things could not be, unless you could explain how they may be: Such sort of objections might as reasonably be urged against several of the plainest things in nature, which we cannot account for, as against this sublime point of revelation, and may in part be answered, and illustrated by them; as for instance, There is *in fact*, a sort of corn, which, when you sow it in the earth, does not spring up, and come to maturity unless it be first rotted and putrified there; so that it revives after it was dead; yea died that it may live again: And cannot that God who yearly produces this effect, as easily raise dead bodies to life, after they have been buried, and corrupted in the grave?

37 And

#### NOTES.

\* Here are two objections; the first, if I mistake not, relates to the possibility of the thing itself; the second to the manner of it; and the apostle's answer is calculated to obviate both. He more directly replies to the first, in ver. 36.; and to the other, in ver. 37, 38.; and then carries on the argument in the following verses after such a manner

as may be applied to the confutation of both.

† The apostle says, *when sown*, not with bitterness of spirit to revile him, but with a good intent to convince him of his dangerous error, and to show him the folly of it; and therefore this is not what our Lord condemns in Matth. v. 22. See the note on Luke xiii. 25.

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

37 And as to the manner of your corn's afterward coming forth, and the different form it then appears in we may daily observe, that the small seed, which you sowed, was not the same in its gay furniture and rich variety of clothing, when you committed it to the earth as it is, when it revives, shoots, and grows up out of it, *First with the blade, then with the ear, and after that with the full corn; (Mark iv. 28.)* but it is sown naked grain, in its own natural substance, stripped of all those beauties, ornaments, and improvements, with which it is afterward produced; whether it be, for example, a grain of wheat †, or other corn, that dies in like manner, before it lives again.

38 But when it rises from under the clods by the power of vegetation, which it receives from the God of nature, he gives it such a body, of the same substance and kind, though different in its form and qualities, as he has appointed to it, and sees fit to clothe it with, suitable to its own species; and gives to every different sort of grain such a body, with all its improvements, raised out of itself, as is proper, and peculiar to its own nature; so that what was sown wheat rises wheat. This is indeed a great mystery in nature; and gives us a lively image of a glorious resurrection to life.

39 Nor is it to be wondered at, that, out of the very same materials, a body of vastly different qualities, from what it had before, should be produced by the almighty power of God; since we have further instances in nature, that may help to illustrate it †. There are, we know, different sorts of flesh in the world: All, that we call flesh, is not of one and the same kind; but there is one sort of flesh, that composes the bodies of men; another, of cattle; another, of fishes; (*Lev. xi. 11.*) and another, of fowls, which, though various in their degrees of excellence, are all formed out of the same original matter, by the wisdom and power of God; though none knows how it is, that these several sorts of flesh are diversified in their qualities, or what contexture of particles it is, that causes the difference, which the great Creator has made between them.

40 And

#### N O T E S.

\* It is with great propriety that the apostle instances in a grain of wheat, as our Lord also did to illustrate his own death, and the advantageous consequences of it, John xii. 24; since there are very few sorts of grain that die in the ground, before they spring up, as the wheat does. See the note on that verse.

† The apostle's reasoning appears to me very conspicuous, if we take the following

instances to relate to the difference, that is made between the present and the glorified state of the bodies of the saints, as that of the corn relates to their rising again with a beauty and glory, vastly surpassing all that it ever had before: But I am otherwise at a loss to see the propriety and design of his introducing these instances, or what connection they have with the preceding.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

40 And there are, as we all see, other bodies of different forms: There are some *heavenly* luminaries, that appear in the huge expanse of the firmament; and there are innumerable other bodies *inanimate*, as well as *animate*, that present themselves to our view all around us upon earth: But the beauty and the quality of these are evidently very different; the glory of the *heavenly* bodies is of one sort, and the glory of the *earthly* bodies is of another; *that* being much more refined, and making a more glittering appearance, than the other: And the difference between a clod of earth, and the brightest luminary in the visible heavens, is like that between the present, and the future state of the bodies of the blessed.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

41 Yea, even among the *heavenly* bodies themselves, there are different degrees of lustre and magnificence: there is one glory of the *Sun*, which shines, with the brightest rays, by its own native light; and there is another glory of the *Moon*, which borrows its light, by reflection, from the sun, and is of a fainter kind; and there is another glory of the other planets, or *wandering stars*, and of the *fixed stars*; for *the stars* themselves differ in glory; the *fixed stars* shining, like the sun, by their own innate light, and the *wandering stars*, like the moon, by reflected and borrowed light: These are bodies of very different splendour; and yet they were all formed out of the same original mass, which mass itself was created out of nothing, by the mighty power of God, though we cannot conceive how. (*Gen. i. 1, &c.*)

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption,

42 To apply all this to the argument in hand, with respect to glorified bodies at the resurrection from the dead, the same divine wisdom and power, which, in ways unknown to us, make the corn spring up with different beauty and improvement, from what it had, when it was sown, and after it had died in the earth; and that God, who has produced different sorts of flesh, and of earthly and heavenly bodies, out of the same original matter, and knew how to make different sortments and modifications of its particles for that purpose, can doubtless distinguish and separate the proper dust of each human body; and can work such glorious alterations upon its present state, and endue it with such inconceivable excellent qualities, as shall make it a fit and desirable companion for the soul; though we know not how. If, like the seed sown in the earth \*, is placed in this world

#### N O T E.

\* There appears to be considerable weight in Mr Locke's observation, that the time of man's being in this world is his being *sown*, and not when, being dead, he is put into the grave.



tion, it is raised in incorruption :

43 It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power :

world a frail mortal body, and is laid into, and buried in the grave, subject to putrefaction ; but it shall be raised again free from all corruptibility, dissolution, or decay ; immortal, never to die more. (*Luke xx. 35, 36.*)

45. Whilst it is in this lower world, it is a poor, mean, contemptible thing, liable to deformity and disfigurement, and needs a covering of some parts, which cannot be exposed without shame ; (*chap. xii. 23.*) and when it comes to die, and be laid in the earth, it is a loathsome carcase, and still more than ever the body of our humiliation : But it shall be raised again a beautiful and splendid body, adorned with heavenly qualities, and shining, like the sun and fixed stars, for ever and ever ; (*Mat. xiii. 42, and Dan. xii. 3.*) yea, like unto Christ's glorious body. (*Phil. iii. 21.*) It subsists in this world a feeble, infirm, and crazy body, liable to sickness, pain, weariness, faintings, and death, incapable of defending itself from the innumerable evils and dangers that surround it, and too weak to hold out with a willing mind in the lively exercises of reason and religion ; (*Matth. xxvi. 41.*) and it is laid in the dust weaker still, utterly defenceless, and an easy prey, even to the worms : (*Job. xix. 26.*) But it shall be raised again with such vigorous, strong, and healthy qualities, as will set it above the reach of inward infirmity, and outward mischief or danger ; and as will enable it to keep pace with the glorified soul, and to execute its will, and join with it in all its noble operations and employments, without weariness and fainting ; and to sustain without the least uncaliness, the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, that shall be put upon it. (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*)

44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is

44 It is brought into, and subsists in this world a merely animal body, (*ψυχικόν*) that is maintained, recruited, and refreshed by food and drink, sleep and air, and has only a sensitive life, like the bodies of brutes ; and, through failure of nourishment by these means, this animal part of man is laid senseless in the grave : But it shall be raised with a much more refined texture, and endued with such spiritual qualities, as not to need any of these animal refreshments ; (*chap. vi. 13.*) it will be possessed and actuated by the Holy Spirit, who

#### N O T E.

grave ; because dead things are not sown, seeds are sown being alive, and die not till after they are sown : And this I apprehend best agrees with the apostle's calling it a *natural or animal* body, (*ψυχικόν*) ver. 44. But yet, as laying, and burying the body in the earth most naturally bears the resemblance of

sowing seed ; and as the body is much more remarkable for its *corruption, weakness, and dishonour*, after, than before it dies, I would not exclude a consideration of its state and condition, when it dies and is laid in the grave.

is a natural body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

who shall raise it from the dead; (*Rom. viii. 11.*) and will be animated and supported immediately by the soul, without the use of those means that are now necessary for it; and it will be of so nimble and active a nature, as resembles that of spirits, and is like the angels of God. (*Luke xx. 36.*) As there is a difference between the glory of one, and another sort of earthly and heavenly bodies in this visible creation; (*ver. 39, 40, 41.*) so there is an animal body, that is a constituent part of human nature in its present state, and is laid down in the dust; and there is a sort of rarified body, with more spiritual qualities, which belongs to the human nature of the saints in the celestial world.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickning spirit.

45 And both these are answerable to their respective originals. Thus it is written (*Gen. ii. 7.*) of the first man *Adam*, the common Father, and public head of all his posterity, that he was made of an animal frame, and endued with a soul, which gave a natural or sensitive life to his body, and communicated the like to all those, that descend from him: But Christ, who may be called the *last Adam* as he was the second and last public person and covenant-head of all his seed, is possessed of a quickning spirit, as he *has life in himself*, and quickens (*ver. 45*) whom he will; (*John v. 21, 26.*) and so conveys a spiritual and immortal life to the bodies of the saints at the resurrection, by his spirit that dwells in them. (*Rom. viii. 11.*)

46 However, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.

46 However, the method, way, and order of God's operation is, that as this spiritual and immortal state of the risen body is, in all respects, more excellent and glorious, than that animal state, in which it is born into, continues in, and dies out of this world; so this spiritual body is not that, which we are first of all partakers of; but we are first endued with an animal body here, and shall be clothed with a spiritual body at the resurrection of the just hereafter; and the like may be observed with respect to the first and last *Adam*; God herein acting according to his usual course in the works of nature, and of grace, which is to begin with the less perfect products, and carry them on to those that are more perfect.

47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second

47 The first man *Adam* was formed, as to his body, out of the dust of the ground, (*Gen. ii. 7.*) and so was of an earthly constitution \*; and, by virtue of the covenant

#### N O T E.

\* *Adam's being of the earth, earthy*, may relate, among other things, to the place where he and his descendants were to have received the reward of his obedience in a state

of immortal happiness. And Christ's being *the Lord from heaven*, may answerably include the place to which he would raise his spiritual seed to be blessed for ever with him: and therefore

second man is the Lord from heaven.

venant made with him, he and his seed were to have enjoyed God, and all their happiness, with immortality upon earth, in case he had sinned; but by reason of the fall, he became frail and mortal; (*Gen. iii. 19.*) and forfeited all promised happiness for himself and his posterity: But as to Christ, who is fitly called the second man, because, how many generations soever passed between Adam and him, he was the second public head, and representative: his original is of an heavenly sort, as he is not only that Lord, who is from heaven, with respect to his divine nature; but came from heaven, in a way of peculiar operation and manifestation, to assume human nature; and he is the Lord, who is now in heaven with his glorified body, and will come from thence, to raise the dead bodies of the saints, and receive them to himself, that they may be for ever with him. (*John xiv. 3. and 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.*)

48 As is the earth, such are they also that are earthly: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

48 Those therefore, whose pedigree is from the earthly man Adam, bear his likeness, and derive such an earthly animal and mortal body from him, as he himself in his fallen state had; and on the other hand, they that are of heavenly birth, born of the spirit, and born from above, and so are formed with heavenly dispositions for heavenly enjoyments, shall derive a spiritual, heavenly, and immortal body from this heavenly Lord, such as he himself now has in his exalted state. (*Phil. iii. 21.*)

49 And as we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

49 And as we who believe in him, and are quickened by his spirit here, have before the debased image of our first Father and covenant head, in an earthly, animal, sickly and mortal state of the body, he having, after his fall, begotten children in his own likeness; (*Gen. v. 3.*) and as we shall continue to bear his despicable image in the rottenness and corruption of the grave; so our bodies will hereafter be raised to such an illustrious and heavenly state, by virtue derived from our second head, as will evidently resemble the glorious body of this heavenly Lord: that we may bear his amiable image in body as well as soul, for ever.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit

50 Now; to lead you into the reason of the vast alteration, which has been represented, as to be made upon glorified bodies, I assure you, my christian-brethren, that the human body, as consisting of flesh and blood, in its present gross and animal state, which renders it weak and sluggish, decaying and mortal, is utterly unfit

#### N O T E.

therefore whoever are raised to heavenly blessedness, it is only in virtue of Christ's blood, and of the covenant made with him, and with them in him. See Dr Goodwin, vol. ii. part iii. p. 45, &c.

herit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

fit, and incapable to behold the divine visions, enjoy the sublime pleasures, and perform the exalted services, that constitute the glory and delight of the heavenly kingdom, for which it is to be formed at the resurrection of the just; nor is it possible that so frail and corruptible a thing as this body, till it be refined should be equal to the entertainments and employments of that illustrious world, or be able to bear the majesty and glory of God, when we shall see him as he is, and behold him face to face. (*Matth. v. 8, and 1 Cor. xiii. 12.* compared with *Exod. xxxiii. 20.*)

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

51 As to this refining change, which is so necessary to be made upon the bodies of the saints, before they can enter the glorious regions of immortality, observe a grand secret, which I am now going to tell you about it; a secret, which has not yet been clearly revealed, and surpasses all present comprehension; I mean that every individual believer shall not die; nor shall their bodies, like the generality of them, sleep in the grave \* for the stage of this world will not be cleared of its inhabitants, before Christ shall come to raise the dead and judge the world, at the last day: But all of us who belong to him, whether we be dead before that time or not, shall, in some unknown way, undergo a surprising and glorious alteration, which, in those that shall be then living, will be equivalent to dying and rising again, as to the purpose of refining their bodies, and making them fit for the heavenly inheritance; that we all together may be ever with the Lord. (*1 Thess. iv. 17.*)

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (For the trumpet shall sound,) and the dead

52 This wonderful change shall be brought about by Divine omnipotence, in an instant, as it were (*αὐτοματῶς*) in an atom of time, or as small a moment as can be imagined, even like that of the twinkling of a man's eye, at the final alarm, which shall be given by the voice of Christ, when he shall call forth the dead out of their graves, (*John v. 28.*) as with an exceeding loud sound of a trumpet, like what was heard at mount Sinai: (*Exod. xix. 16.*) For such an alarm will be given,

22

#### NOTE.

\* We are not to suppose that by *we shall not all sleep*, the apostle meant himself and the believers of that age: but he therein personates the whole church, or mystical body of Christ: For elsewhere, speaking of the Christians in those days, he says *their* mortal bodies should be quickened by the spirit of God which dwelt in them, (*Rom. viii. 11.* and says, including himself, *He that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus,* (*1 Cor. iv. 14.*) And he speaks of it as a great mistake in them, who thought,

the day of Christ's second appearing was at hand; and calls those persons *deceivers*, that suggested any thing like it; he also tells the *Thessalonians*, that *there must be a falling away*, and that the *man of sin must be first revealed*; and that he had acquainted them with these things, while he was with them, before he wrote either of his epistles to them, *1 Thess. ii. 1, 6.* and both these epistles are universally allowed to have been written before the first to the *Corinthians*.

dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

as, for its suddenness and solemnity, will be like the sounding of a trumpet, before we are aware, to summon us to an appearance at the judgment-seat of Christ; and then the dead bodies of the saints shall be raised to immortal life; and whether we, who believe, be living or dead at that time, all of us shall pass under an amazing and advantageous change of the *qualities*, though not of the materials of our bodies, to fit them for the glory of the celestial world.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

53 For, in order hereunto, (*το φθαρτον νυνο*) this very individual decaying and corruptible body, which is now liable to putrefaction, and will soon corrupt in the grave, must of necessity be new built, and formed into a state of strength and vigour, of spiritual and incorruptible qualities \*. And this very body (*το θνητον νυνο*) which is of mortal frame, and, generally speaking, shall die, must be, not a-new created, but happily altered by a proper resurrection of the same substance, and must put on the form of a glorious immortality.

54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

54 And when the time comes for this corruptible body to be clothed with incorruptible glory, and for this mortal body to be immortalized; then shall that antient prophecy be completely fulfilled, (*Isa. xxv. 8.*) where it is written, that the formidable tyrant, death, which has conquered and reigned over believers, together with the rest of mankind, so as to subject them to its stroke for thousands of generations, shall itself be entirely vanquished, and never have the least dominion or power afterwards over them: That last enemy, which has been such a terror to many of them, shall then be finally and totally destroyed (*ver. 26.*) for ever †; and shall be as absolutely abolished, with respect to every one of them, as if it had never been.

55 O death, where is thy sting?

55 In this view of things, all real Christians may take up their joyful triumph before-hand, and sing in full assurance of faith, and with a holy contempt and defiance of death and the grave, according to what is written *Hos. xiii. 14* ‡; and may anticipate their future

#### N O T E S.

\* Putting on incorruption and immortality, is of like import with being clothed with our house from heaven, (*1 Cor. v. 2.*) The Jews often spoke of the bodies of the just, as to be clothed with the light of glory; and agreeable to this, it is said that they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, as the stars for ever and ever, and as the sun in the kingdom of their father, (*Dan. xii. 3.* and *Matth. xiii. 43.*) We have also an emblem of this in Christ's transfiguration, *Matth. xvii. 2.* and in his appearance to the apostle John, *Rev. i. 13*—16.

† Dr *Whitby* has shewn that *in victory* (*νικησας*) constantly signifies in the *Septuagint*, *for ever*: But as this phrase is used in *Matth. xii. 20.* which, as far as I find, is the only place besides this, where it occurs in the New Testament; and as it is there rendered, and plainly signifies *unto or in victory* both these senses are very consistent, and may, with great propriety, be taken into the paraphrase of this verse.

‡ See how exactly this answers to the Hebrew text, *Hos. xiii. 14.* in Dr *Pocock's* account of that place,

O grave, where is thy victory?

ture glorying, in which they will bravely insult over these enemies, with joy and transport, when they shall be actually raised to immortal blessedness; O death, what is now become of your malignant sting? What real harm have you ever been able to do us? Or what can you do any more against us? We despise all your venomous darts. O grave, what are all your conquests over us now come to, which you seemed to have gained with uncontrollable power, and through fear of which we were kept in bondage many times upon earth (*Heb. ii. 15.*) What is now become of all your spoils, which you made of us, but are now forced to deliver up into a state of perfect liberty, never to be seized or touched by you any more?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

56 The very worst and most destructive thing in death is the guilt of sin, which, unremoved causes not only a separation of the soul and body, but of both from God, not merely for a season, but for ever. It is *this*, that fills death with all its terrors, and like the sting of a serpent, makes it so fearfully hurtful as it is; were it not for *this*, barely dying would be of little consequence considering what a poor, empty, vexatious world we live in: And that which gives such a formidable power to sin, whereby it not only subjects us to the death of the body, but transmits us to a future judgment, and to all the miseries that follow after it, is the righteous and holy law of God, armed with its curse which condemns to endless death and destruction, as the just wages of sin. (*Rom. vi. 23.*)

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

57 But forever blessed be the name of our gracious God, who has freed us from, and given us a complete victory over sin, the condemnation of the law and every thing in death, through the merit and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, by his being made a curse for us, (*Gal. iii. 13.*) and rose again for our justification; (*Rom. iv. 25.*) and so has disarmed death of its sting, and conquered it both for himself, and us who believe in him, that he might raise our bodies from the grave to an incorruptible, unfading and deathless inheritance of all glory and blessedness, after his example, in conformity to him, and by virtue derived from him.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast

58 In reflexion therefore upon, and as a practical improvement of all this, my brethren, who are thus beloved of God, and exceeding dear to me, be ye excited, animated and encouraged to be (*steadfast*) firm and stable in the faith, hope, and holy profession of the gos-

fast unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, so far as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

pel, and particularly with respect to what has been preached to you, and ye have received, about the atoning death, and resurrection of Christ, as the head of the church, and about a glorious resurrection of the saints to eternal life through him: (*ver. 3. &c.*) Let the certain evidence ye have of the truth of all this, and of its vast importance, determine you, by divine grace, to *continue grounded and settled on the faith*, that neither the artifices of cunning men, the corruptions of your own hearts, the temptations of satan, nor the allurements or terrors of this evil world, may ever move you away from the hope of the gospel: (*Col. i. 23.*) And let these delightful thoughts engage you to be constantly, perseveringly, and invariably encreasing and abounding, yet more and more, in every good work, both in a way of service and suffering, which the Lord Jesus may call you to undergo for his sake, to his glory, and in obedience to his commands, while ye dwell in mortal flesh; as being fully satisfied, in consideration of the power, grace, faithfulness and promise of God; of the meritorious death, resurrection and intercession of Christ; and of your vital union, and covenant-relation to him, that your work of faith and labour of love shall not be lost, or forgotten of God; (*Heb. vi. 10.*) but that, as he will be with you, to assist you in it, living and dying here; so he will crown it all, with an ample recompence, in the realms of immortal life and honour at the resurrection of the just, (*Luke. xiv. 14.*) through and on account of the righteousness of the Lord, the Redeemer.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How confirmed, important, and delightful, are the doctrines of the atoning death of Christ, and of his resurrection, and the resurrection of the saints to eternal life through him! The Scriptures of the Old Testament, and many faithful witnesses of the New, unite their testimony to the resurrection of our Lord from the dead; and as surely as he rose to a glorious life, all, that are his, shall rise after him; in their proper time and order: For he is the first-fruit of them that sleep in him; and, considering him as the *second Adam*, and covenant-head, he cannot but have as much virtue to raise them to everlasting life, as the *first Adam*, and covenant-head had, to subject them to corporal death, and all the miseries that attend it. O wonderful contrivance and operation of divine wisdom and grace, that as by man came death; so by man, who is also the Lord from heaven, came the resurrection of the dead! How shocking and dangerous are the absurdities of denying these fundamental articles of Christianity! If there be no truth in these, the apostles, though humble and holy men, who owned themselves to be what they were, by the grace of God, were downright designing and wilful liars; the death of Christ, and all our faith and hope in him are vain, and we are still under the guilt and power of our sins; they that have died in the faith of Christ, and suffered martyrdom for his sake, are lost for ever; and they that have been encouraged, by their example, to make a solemn profession of his name, have been wretchedly deluded; and Christians, of all men

in this world, are the most miserable, and act the most foolish part imaginable, in exposing themselves to disgrace, hardships, and dangers on his account, rather than enjoying the ease and honours, plenty and pleasures of this life, without fear of any thing after death: Farewel then all morality and religion at once. But, whatever may be suggested to the contrary, by men of corrupt minds, there is a future state of glory, and the bodies of believers shall certainly be raised to immortal life, when Christ shall have subdued the last enemy, which is death, and shall deliver up the present administration of his delegated kingdom, and be himself subject as Man and Mediator, to the Father, that every thing may revert to its original order, and God, inclusive of Father, Son, and Spirit, may be in all heavenly blessedness. And, O how great will be the splendor and excellence of these risen bodies, beyond what they now are! Behold a lively emblem of it in the corn, that is sown, dies, and revives again with greater gaiety and verdure! Behold the different bodies of various kinds of flesh, and the different glory of the sun, moon, and stars among themselves; and superior to that of all earthly bodies, though they were all formed by the power of God, out of the same original materials! What cannot the omnipotent God, the Author of all this, raise the bodies of the saints to as much greater glory hereafter, than they appear in here, and when they are buried in the grave, as the brightest luminary in heaven outshines a very clod of earth? One is as easy to him as the other. They are now corruptible, mean, weak, sluggish, animal and mortal bodies, bearing the despicable image of the earthly Adam; but they shall then be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, active, refined and immortal bodies, bearing the illustrious image of Christ's glorified body. This surprizing change of their present qualities is absolutely necessary to fit them for the heavenly state; and therefore those believers that shall be alive upon earth, as well as those that shall be dead and rotten in the grave, at the second coming of Christ, shall undergo a like immortalizing and inconceivable change; it being impossible that flesh and blood, in their present gross, corruptible, weak, and mortal condition, should inherit the kingdom of immortal glory: But when this blessed alteration shall be made upon the body, death will be thoroughly vanquished, and abolished for ever. How joyfully then may believers, in realizing anticipations, triumph over death and the grave, as conquered enemies, disarmed of their sting, and of all their power, through the merit and victory of our Lord Jesus Christ! What thankful acknowledgments, with their whole hearts, should they render to God on this account! And how should they, in assured prospects of all this, be animated to the utmost steadfastness, and perseverance in Christ's ways; and go on with holy resolution and courage in his strength, and aboundings in his work; as knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

## C H A P. XVI.

*The apostle gives orders to the church about a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, 1,—4. Mentions his design of making them a visit, 5,—9. Recommends Timothy to them, and encourages their hopes of seeing Apollos in due time, 16,—12. Exhorts them to watchfulness and steadfastness in faith and love, and to shew a becoming respect to Stephanas and his family, and to all his fellow-labourers, 13,—18. Sends Christian salutations from himself and others; and concludes with a solemn admonition, benediction, and assurance of his own love to them, 19,—24.*

## TEXT.

NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given

## PARAPHRASE.

AS to the charitable collection, that has been desired of you, for the poor Christians, who through public calamities, and their sufferings for the gospel, are reduced



given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

reduced to extreme necessity in *Judea* and *Jerusalem*; (ver. 3.) I would give the same direction to you, as I have to the churches of Christ in the province of *Galatia*, who readily fell in with it, and whose generous example will, I trust, stir up a noble emulation in you; since ye so far exceed them in temporal riches, as well as in spiritual gifts. (See the notes on *chap. iv. 8.* and *2 Cor. viii. 2.*)

2 Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

2 As ye, according to universal custom in all New Testament churches, constantly meet together for religious worship, in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, every first day of the week, which is by way of eminence *the Lord's day*; (see the notes on *John xx. 26.* and *Acts xx. 7.*) and as that is a proper time for works of charity, my advice to you is, that every one, who is in any capacity for it, would from week to week freely separate, and lay by him, certain proportions of his worldly substance for this charitable use, and (*συναρπάσας*) put them into the common stock on that day, as a treasure for the poor, and a treasure that will turn to his own best account; and let this be done according to the revenue of his estate, or according to the gains by business and labour, which God has given him, be it more or less, the week before; that so, when I may have opportunity of coming to you, the contributions may be ready collected, and there may be no need for me to excite you to them then, or to wait for their being brought together.

3 And, when I come, whomsoever you shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

3 And when, by the will of God, I may have the pleasure, as I hope, of seeing you, I will heartily join with you in sending such brethren, as ye may think most proper, and shall recommend by your letters testimonial as prudent, compassionate and faithful persons\*; and I will readily concur in such recommendation of them; as worthy to be intrusted with your benevolence, and to carry it to our indigent fellow Christians at *Jerusalem*, and in the adjacent country of *Judea*, as the free gift, (*χαρὰν*) which God has inclined, and enabled you to bestow upon them, and which ye have cheerfully done, from a sense of his rich love and grace both to them and you.

4 And if it be so needful, that I go also,

4 And if it should be thought needful, convenient, or fit, (*αἰεὶ*) and might be of any advantage to the pious and benevolent design, for me also to accompany them in that errand, I will take them along with me, when

#### N O T E.

\* This passage, as pointed with a *comma*, before, or after, *by letter*, may signify either the apostle's own, or the church's letter

of recommendation, but there is no inconsistency in supposing that both might be meant, if thought needful.

so, they shall go with me.

5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: (for I do pass through Macedonia:)

6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey, whither-soever I go.

7 For I will not see you now by the way, for I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

8 But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

when I may go to *Jerusalem*, and give them all the assistance and encouragement, I am capable of, in discharging that important trust.

5 In the mean while, ye may be well assured, that, if my affairs admit of it, I fully intend to make you a visit, when I shall have gone through *Macedonia*\*: For it is my present purpose to make a tour through that *Grecian* province, as soon as I have finished the work, to which I am called at *Ephesus*. (ver. 8.)

6 And in case providence shall direct my course, according to my present views, I may probably stay a considerable time, and even spend all the winter season with you in hopes of finding such an interest in your friendship, notwithstanding the parties which have been made against me, that, when I take my leave of you in the spring, ye will send some of your brethren, as is customary with the churches, in token of respect and kindness, to accompany, conduct and supply me in my journey, (*Tit.* iii. 13.) to what place soever I may then be bound.

7 For such is my affection toward you, and concern for you, and I promise myself so much pleasure in seeing, and conversing with you, that it would not satisfy me to make you only a short transient visit now, as it were *enpassant*; (*ἐν παροῖσι*) but I hope to continue some length of time with you, to assist you in your spiritual affairs, and set those things to rights, that are amiss among you, (*chap.* xi. 34.) if it shall please the Lord, whose kingdom rules over all, to dispose of me and my services so, as to admit of it. (*Jam.* iv. 15.)

8 But it seems necessary for me to stay yet a while at *Ephesus*†; till it may be full time to set out for *Jerusalem*, to be there at pentecost, not to celebrate that feast, which is now no longer obligatory to be kept as a religious festival; but to take an opportunity of making known what the Lord has done by me in my travels

#### N O T E S.

\* In this and the three following verses, the apostle speaks of the scheme he had laid in his own mind, not under any immediate inspiration or suggestion of the Spirit; but in the ordinary way of men's forming their purposes, according to the present appearances of things: and therefore he mentions this design with a reserve, *if the Lord permit*, (ver. 7.) and, in the event, it appears from *1 Cor.* i. 31, 36, that he was prevented executing this scheme; and it seems from *Acts* xx. 1. that by means of the uproar at *Ephesus*, he was forced away from thence, sooner than he had intended.

† It appears highly probable from this

verse, and from the citations, sent from the churches in *Asia*, (ver. 19.) that the apostle wrote this epistle from *Ephesus*, and not, as the postscript says, from *Philippi*: For *Philippi* was a city of *Macedonia* in *Europe*, *Acts* xvi. 12, and the apostle was not yet come to *Macedonia*, as appears from ver. 5. of this chapter; But *Ephesus* was the Metropolis of the *Proconsular Asia*. And there seems to be another mistake in the postscript, which speaks of this epistle's being sent by *Timothy*; whereas the apostle speaks doubtfully, ver. 10. of *Timothy's* reaching *Corinth*, though he had sent him thither. *chap.* iv. 17.

vels, and of serving his cause among the vast multitudes of *Jews* and *profelytes*, which will be there on that occasion: Till that time I think of abiding here.

9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

9 For God has opened a large field of service for me at this place; the word of the Lord runs and is glorified, is freely preached and made effectual to the conversion of many souls, as I also hope, through grace, it will be to still many more: And I am the rather induced to continue here, as long as I well can; because, though I have hot work of it, 'tis of importance for me to make a stand against, and confute the great numbers of subtil and furious antagonists \*, who are prejudiced against Christ and his ways, and who, envying my success, set themselves to oppose me and my ministrations, and to obstruct the progress of the gospel, and pervert those that have received it.

10 Now if Timothy come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I shall do.

10 Now if the beloved and faithful *Timothy*, whom I have sent, (*chap. iv. 17.*) should arrive safe, as I hope he will, among you; see that ye treat him in such a friendly, peaceable, and orderly manner, as shall be a comfort, and not a trouble to him; and do all that in you lies to prevent his being discouraged, and to secure him from the danger of insults by the factious parties among you, on account of the just reproofs, which he may be obliged to give to such of you, as walk disorderly: For he is my dear fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord Jesus, and comes to you upon the very same business, with the same spirit, and the same sincere affection to you, as I myself should, were I to be present with you.

11 Let therefore no man despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for

11 Let none of you therefore think meanly of him, or behave disrespectfully towards him, or slight what he may say in the name, and by the authority of Christ, because of his youth (*1 Tim. iv. 1.*) but use him well, while he is with you, and treat him kindly at his leaving you; let some of you attend him in his way, to shew him due respect; to guard him against mischiefs from wicked and unreasonable men; and to supply him with necessities in his journey, that he may return back to me and other friends, with comfort, before I leave *Ephesus*: For I, and several brethren with me here †, live in

#### N O T E.

\* Mr Pyle, on this passage observes, that the apostle seems plainly to allude to the *Ulla Circus Maximi*, from whence the race-horses and chariots were wont to be started. And this is very much countenanced by the phrase *ἀντιπάλους*, those adversaries answering to the *antagonists* in the races, against

whom the apostle was to run, as it were, and strive to out do. And he refers for further explication of this thought to *Jacobus Lyrius*, in his *Agonistica Sacra*, chap. 30.

† With the brethren, may relate either to those that were with the apostle, or to those that might come with *Timothy*.

for him with the brethren.

12 As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren; but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

in expectation and desire of seeing him again, together with such brethren, as may accompany him.

12 As to our dear brother, the eloquent *Apollos* tho' some of you have ranked yourselves under him, as the head of a party, in opposition to me, (*chap. iii. 4.*) I was sincerely and very earnestly desirous and importunate with him, that he would go along with the brethren, who bring this letter to you; as being well satisfied that he would by no means encourage, but do all that in him lies, to discountenance party divisions among you; and as having hope that his interest with such, as have sheltered themselves under his name, might put an end to their factious temper and views: But he, bearing the like tender and respectful regard to me, as I do to him, was not willing to come just now; lest it should have a contrary effect, or be interpreted by some, as though he would ingratiate himself with you, at the expence of my character: Nevertheless such is his affection to you, and concern for you, that he intends, God willing, to pay you a visit, when it may be more seasonable for him and you \*.

13 To conclude my admonitions and advices, Let me intreat you to keep a wakeful and strict guard upon yourselves, against all the designs of those, that would impose upon you, and either by terrors or allurements or subtle artifices, would carry you off from the truth and holiness of the gospel; watch against all temptations, watch over your own spirits; watch unto prayer, and for divine assistances in it, as also for returns of mercy in answer to it: See that ye continue steadfast in the belief of those important doctrines; which ye have received from the apostles of Christ; adhere firmly to them; live by faith upon them; stand up for them; and abide unshaken, and with perseverance, in your profession of them: Behave yourselves with wisdom, courage, and holy resolution in your attachment to the truths and ways of our Lord, in the face of all opposition and danger; acquit yourselves in the exercise of every duty, and in resisting every sin and temptation like men grown up to maturity of judgment and understanding, and to full strength and establishment in Christ.

14 And

#### N O T E.

† The reasons of *Paul's* desiring *Apollos*, and of *Apollos's* not choosing, to go at that time, were very probably those hinted in the paraphrase; and to discover a most excellent and exemplary spirit in them both, as a mutual affection subsisted between them, and neither of them envied, was jealous

of, or would detract from the other: how much sooner different parties at *Corinth* might run down one and cry up the other: Or, perhaps, *Apollos* might have some work at *Ephesus*, or elsewhere, of too great moment for him to neglect just then.

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus: for that

14 And see to it, that whatsoever ye do, in defence, of the faith, in worship and discipline, and in common conversation, it be with a spirit of meekness and love, for promoting peace and purity and doctrine and manners, together with the good and edification of each other, and of the whole church.

15 I earnestly intreat you, my dear brethren in the Lord, to shew a particular respect to the family of *Stephanas*, which I myself baptized, (See the note on chap. i. 16.) and which\*, as ye well know, (see the second note on *Rom. xvi. 5.*) were the first family of converts in all *Achaia*, the province in which your city stands; and so, like the first fruits that were offered to God under the law, they had the honour of being the pledge and earnest of the great harvest of souls, that have been since gathered to Christ there; ye also know that they have remarkably approved themselves sincere disciples, and faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, as having devoted themselves, in an orderly manner, (*παρακαταλαβόντες*) unto, and laid themselves out in, succouring and supporting his poor members†; in assisting, cherishing, and supplying the wants of his holy ministers) and in managing the affairs of the church, and doing every thing that they have been capable of, and called to, for promoting its interests on all occasions.

16 I beseech you, that, instead of being carried away by your new upstart teachers, ye would reverence, honour and esteem, be directed by, and copy after the laudable example of these, and such as these who have signaliz'd themselves as faithful to Christ and his church and that ye would shew the like acknowledgment and regard to every one, that joins with us, the apostles of Christ the same spirit, for supporting and promoting the gospel, and that labours in the work of the Lord; whether it be by preaching, or in any other way, as being embarked in the same glorious cause with us.

17 I greatly rejoice that so worthy and prudent brethren, as *Stephanas* and *Fortunatus* and *Achaicus*, came from you with your Letter to me‡; For they have let me

#### N O T E.

\* Ye know (*οἰσάτε*) may be rendered imperatively, *know ye*, in which sense it is considered in the former part of the paraphrase on this verse.

† The saints or holy ones may relate to ministers, as well as people; and the ministry of, or rather to, the saints, (*διακονία τοῖς ἁγίοις*) seems to be meant of ministering to the saints in a way of pious and charitable assistance, such as belongs to the office of

deacons, as well as, or rather than, in preaching the gospel; but the paraphrase is formed here and in the next verse, in such a manner, as may be also applied to the last.

‡ We know nothing of these three persons, more than what is here said of them, and is observed of *Stephanas*, ver. 15. They it seems, were the messengers that attended the letter from the church to the apostle, (See the note on chap. vii.) and their

that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

me into a better and more thorough view of the present affairs of your church, than I ever had before; and have been made up what was wanting in your letter to set your case in the more favourable light in which I now see it, and by which I perceive that, bad as things are, they are better with many of you than I feared,

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

18 For their presence and conversation is extremely agreeable to me; and they have acted so fair and candid a part in representing your temper and conduct as has been very pleasing to my own mind, and cannot but be so to yours; and ye will doubtless share with me in the joy I have, by means of what they have said to remove some misunderstandings and jealousies that might otherwise have arose between you and me: Ye therefore ought to have the greatest veneration and respect for such excellently spirited men, as put the most charitable construction upon your behaviour, and are willing to make the best of you.

19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

19 The churches of Christ here, in the lesser *Asia*, (see the note on *ver.* 8.) cordially wish you the best of blessings from the Lord Jesus. The noted *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, that exemplary and eminently religious pair, who reside at *Ephesus*, (*Acts.* xviii. 24, 26, compared with xix. 1.) speak abundantly of their ardent desires, that ye may be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus: and so do their amiable family, which, like the heads of it, are an ornament to their holy profession. See the notes on *Rom.* xvi. 3, 5.)

20 All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.

20 All the Christian brethren, that are with me send their religious and affectionate respects to you: (See that ye with like spiritual affection, and sincere good will salute each other in the Lord, with all the usual forms of expressing it, in such a holy manner as becomes saints. See the note on *Rom.* xvi. 16.)

21 The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.

21 As to myself, none can be more solicitous for, and heartily desirous of, your soul's prosperity in all things; in testimony of which, I *Paul*, give it under my own hand-writing; though in the rest of the epistle I have employed an *Amanuensis* to transmit any thoughts to you. (see the note on *Rom.* xvi. 22.)

22 Only

N O T E.

their supplying what was lacking on the church's part, is not meant of any temporal supply; for the apostle absolutely refused every thing of that kind from them, as appears from *chap.* ix. 12—18; but it relates to the fuller and more advantageous representation, these good men had made of the *Corinthians*, than they had given of them-

selves in their letter, in which, (as persons under a humbling sense of sin are apt to do) they had set forth the bad things among them, in such a strong light, as might leave room to think that there was little good left or that the number of those, that walked disorderly, was greater, than it really was.

21 If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha.

22 Only permit me, at the same time, to leave with you this solemn warning against the false teachers, that trouble and would pervert you; If any of them, or indeed any one whatsoever, be his character and pretences what they will, prove an enemy to the person, offices and grace, doctrines and commands of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; if he be disaffected to him; if he obstinately reject and oppose him; or if he apostatize from him, and, through the temptations of this world, cast off his love to him and profession of his name, let such an one be looked upon as execrable and abominable; and let him be cast out of the church and so delivered up, in case of final obstinacy, to the most terrible judgment, and heaviest curse, that the righteous God shall see fit to inflict upon him\*; and, unless he be brought to repentance, let him be left to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, when he shall come to judge the world at the last day.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

24 The salutation, which I now add with much greater pleasure, than I find in anathematizing any one whatsoever, and which sums up all my desires for you in a few comprehensive words, is this, May the free favour of Jesus Christ, your Lord and mine, be extended to, and continually abide with all, and every one of you in the utmost fulness of its ample and distinguishing fruits and effects, to your present establishment and edification in faith, comfort and holiness, and to your eternal salvation.

24 My love be with you all in Christ

24 To conclude, Though I have been obliged in faithfulness to reprove you, with just severity, for many things that have been amiss among you; yet it has been merely in love for your own good; and my heart is so far from being cool toward you, or alienated from you, and prejudiced against you, that my most sincere affection and best wishes, together with the utmost that I am, or ever may be, capable of doing for your spiritual benefit†, attend you all for Christ's sake, on account of your relation to him, and in reflection upon the privileges and blessings, that ye are favoured with in, and through

#### N O T E S.

\* *Anathema*, signifies a thing devoted to destruction, and *Maranatha*. is a *Syriac* word, which signifies *the Lord comes*; and so denotes the severest vengeance, that is to be executed at his coming to judgment.

† It is with incomparable sweetness and prudent insinuation, that the apostle closes an epistle, in which he had so sharply re-

proved the *Corinthians* for their faults, with such an assurance of his love, as is not to be found at the end of any other of his epistles, that he might convince them of his good will in all that he had said; and might take off their prejudices against it, and give it the more easy access to their minds.

Christ Jesus. A- through him. To assure you of which, and of my earnest desire and hope, that ye may be abundantly and eternally blessed, I say, *Amen.*

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How incumbent is the duty of giving charitable relief to our fellow Christians! Good ministers are willing to do all they can to encourage and promote it, and to see that the liberality of churches, under their care, be duly applied; every believer should be ready to join in it, and be continually laying by something for it, in proportion to the prosperity, which God, whose blessing makes rich, is pleased to give him in his temporal affairs; the generosity of some should excite others to a noble emulation, according to their respective abilities; and collections for such uses, are very proper to attend our works of piety on the Lord's days. How desirous are the servants of Christ to go, or stay, where-ever he calls them, with an intire submission to the will of God! And what a pleasure is it for them to abide, where an effectual door is opened for them to preach the gospel with success, though they meet with ever so much opposition from their adversaries! With what brotherly love should fellow labourers honour one another, free from all jealousy or envy! And with what cheerfulness, esteem, and respect should churches receive all those that are well recommended to them, as engaged in the same work of the Lord with the apostles, and as faithful in devoting themselves to the service of the saints! What need have real Christians to be excited to watchfulness, and steadfastness in faith and love! And while they reject those with detestation that discover an enmity or disaffection to Christ, and leave them, tho' with tender reluctance to his righteous judgment, at his second coming; how affectionately should his disciples testify their love one to another, in courteous and religious salutations, as well as in all other ways! And how heartily should they say, *Amen*, to the solemn benedictions of those that minister in sacred things, as joining their own desires and prayers, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with all those that love him in sincerity and truth!



A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Second Epistle of the Apostle PAUL  
T O T H E  
C O R I N T H I A N S,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

---

The PREFACE to the Second Epistle to the CORINTHIANS.

**T**HIS second epistle of the apostle *Paul* to the *Corinthians* was very probably wrote from *Philippi*, a city of *Macedonia*, about a year after the former: For it was after he had been at *Troas*, and returned to *Macedonia*, and while *Timothy* was with him in his second journey thither, as appears by comparing *chap. i. 1.* and *ii. 12 13*, with *Acts xix. 22*, and *xx. 1—4*: And as, at the close of his first, epistle, he gave orders concerning a collection for the poor saints at *Jerusalem*; so in this, *chap. ix. 2.* he says that *Achaia*, of which *Corinth* was a principal city, was ready a year ago.

Between that time and this, he, to his great satisfaction, as appears from the *second* and *seventh* chapters, received an account, by *Titus*, of the good effect of his first letter upon the generality of the church, in their repentance, and submission to his apostolic authority; and in their regularly proceeding, as he had directed them, against the incestuous person, who was thereby brought to an humble and contrite sense of his sin.

Hereupon he wrote this *second* letter, in which, after the preface, he begins with apologizing for his not coming to them, so soon as he had given them reason to expect; (*1 Epist. xvi. 5.*) and with recommending the sorrowful penitent to their Christian compassion, and to a restoration of him to his place in the church, *Chap. i. ii.* He then enters upon his main point of confuting his adversaries, in which he asserts, and enlarges upon, his own apostolic character, labours, sufferings, encouragements, preaching, and success, with greater freedom and boldness, than in the former epistle, *chap. iii.—vi.* In the three following chapters, (*vii, viii, ix.*) as also here and there in seve-

ral other places, he urges various duties upon the *Corinthians*, suitable to the state of things among them; but particularly, and most at large, exhorts them to finish their charitable collections in a generous manner, and get them ready to be transmitted to *Jerusalem*, according to their promises the last year; and according to his own good opinion of them, which, he tells them, he had mentioned with pleasure to other churches, for exciting the like liberality among them. In the *Tenth* chapter, and so on to the end of the epistle, he re-assumes the subject relating to himself, and to the false apostles, that still audaciously vied with him; and, with a peculiar smartness of stile, sets himself against them, and their adherents, that invidiously reproached him, and even forced him to speak of himself in terms, which carried the face of folly and vanity in self applause. And he concludes the whole with an affectionate salutation and benediction.

Perhaps, because a great part of this, and the former epistle to the *Corinthians*, refers to the peculiar circumstances of that church, some private Christians may be apt to think these to be less useful, than many others of the sacred writings, especially of the New Testament. But even the things that most immediately and singularly related to them, are of great service in all similar cases, that might fall out in after-ages; and there are so many important doctrines of common concernment interwoven with them, as must render the whole exceeding valuable and edifying to Christians, through all generations. These epistles have also some advantages, that are not to be met with in any other part of the word of God, as they may be deemed the seat of divine directions, relating to the spiritual privileges, rights, and powers, worship, and discipline of the churches of Christ; to the purity of doctrines, manners, and celebrations of gospel ordinances; and to the unity, peace, and order, mutual watch and care, and religious respect to faithful pastors, that ought to be preserved among them. And therefore these, as well as all other parts of the inspired scriptures, are justly to be esteemed profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle introduces this epistle to the Corinthian church, as he did the former, with an assertion of his apostolic office, and a salutation, 1, 2. Blesses God for comforting him in, and delivering him out of, his tribulations; and turns his own experience into an argument for the encouragement of others under their troubles, 3,—11. Professes his own and his fellow labourers integrity, 12,—14. Assigns the principal reason of his not coming to them so soon, as might have been expected from what he had said in his former letter; and so vindicates himself from the charge of inconstancy on that account, 15,—24.*

## TEXT.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

## PARAPHRASE.

**I** Paul, an apostle, whom Jesus Christ immediately called and authorized to that high office, according to the free appointment and good pleasure of God the Father; even I, and the beloved *Timothy*, whom, notwithstanding his youth, I cheerfully own as a faithful brother in Christ, and in the work of the ministry; we, I say, he concurring with what I write by the dictate of the holy Ghost, (see the notes on *Rom. i. 1*, and *1 Cor. i. 1*.) heartily join in good will, and in sending this *second epistle* to the church at *Corinth*, which God has chosen, and called by his grace, and collected out of the world, to be his habitation through the spirit and the seat of all divine ordinances; as also to all professing believers, who, according to the judgment of charity, are holy ones, that reside in any other part of *Achaia* or *Greece*.

2 Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We salute you in the Lord, earnestly praying that the free love and favour of God, with all its happy fruits and effects, which are usually summed up in the comprehensive term *peace*, may be vouchsafed, and abound toward you from him, who is your as well as our reconciled God and Father; and who in the oeconomy of salvation, is the fountain of all its blessings, and in his eternal counsels laid out the scheme of conveying them: And we wish you the richest communications of them from the Lord Jesus Christ, our exalted Mediator and Saviour, who has purchased them by his blood, has them all in his hands to dispense, and effectually gives them, in concurrence with the Father, by his spirit.

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

3 For ever magnified and adored, admired, loved, and praised, with all possible thanksgiving and joy, be the blessed and glorious God, even the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ\*, who, as such, is full of tender compassion and the author of all pardoning and relieving mercies; and is the God and giver of all temporal, spiritual, and eternal consolation, through his son.

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that

4 Inexpressibly great are the kind indulgencies of this gracious God and Father, who, by his spirit, word, and providence, supports, assists, and comforts me and my companions, in all our troubles and afflictions of every

## N O T E.

\* The Father hears this relation to Christ, with respect to his divine nature, by an eternal, inconceivable and necessary generation; with respect to his human nature, by an immediate miraculous production; and with respect to his office character, as God Man Mediator, by a peculiar covenant re-

lation; which consideration of God exhibits him to our faith, under the gospel state, in a more august, endearing and encouraging light, than that in which he had made himself known, under the Old Testament, as the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*.

that we may be  
to comfort  
which are  
trouble, by  
the comfort  
wherewith we  
ourselves are com-  
forted of God.

every kind, and especially for conscience sake; and he is pleased to do this in his infinite wisdom and goodness, not only for *our* succour; but likewise for the benefit of others, that we may be the better taught, disposed, and qualified, by our own experience, to sympathize with, and administer suitable words of encouragement and comfort to them, that are in any sort of tribulation, relating to soul or body; and so may be instruments in his hand of raising their faith, and their hope of the like seasonable refreshments and deliverances, as God, for Christ's sake, has favoured us with.

5 For as the  
sufferings of  
Christ abound in  
us, so our conso-  
lation also abound-  
eth by Christ.

5 For as we have suffered many grievous and heavy trials on Christ's account, and in conformity to him, who sympathizes with us in them, and counts them his own; (*Acts ix. 4.*) so our inward spiritual joys have abounded in proportion to them, by means of that sweet communion, which, at such times especially, he has given us with himself, to allay and counterbalance them, and to fortify us against them.

6 And whether  
we be afflicted, it  
is for your conso-  
lation and salva-  
tion, which is ef-  
fectual in the en-  
doring of the  
same, sufferings,  
which we also suf-  
fer: or whether  
we be comforted,  
it is for your con-  
solation and sal-  
vation.

6 And all this is designed and ordered, and in fact has proved to be, for your advantage; so that whether, on one hand, we be pressed with ever so many calamities, it is with a view to the animating of you under such trials, as may befall you, especially for the gospel's sake, that when ye see with what Christian fortitude, patience, and consolation, we are enabled to bear them, ye, encouraged by our example, may be comforted in your own souls, and emboldened to hold on in your holy profession unto complete salvation; which is effected, in a powerful manner, by means of your being made willing to undergo the same sort of troubles, on the behalf of Christ, that we ourselves have bore, and been supported under: Or whether, on the contrary, we be relieved and comforted, by seasonable deliverances out of our tribulations, it is made effectual for promoting your joy, and your final salvation together with ours.

7 And our  
joy of you is  
steadfast, knowing  
that as you are  
partakers of the  
sufferings, so shall  
ye be also of the  
consolation.

7 And from what has already appeared among you, since ye received my former letter, (*ver. 13, 14.*) we fully expect a good event with relation to you; being well assured, that as God has now made you willing sharers with us in sufferings, and inclined your hearts to sympathize with us in ours, for the sake of Christ; so, in the riches of his grace and faithfulness, ye are, and shall be likewise sharers with us in present divine comforts, suitable to your day and difficulties, till all shall be perfected in the joys of heaven.

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom

8 For as to our sufferings for Christ, it may be proper to remind you, my dear brethren, of the extreme hardships, which have befallen me and my companions in the *Lesser Asia* \*, that, while we were desirous to minister the gospel of the grace of God in that country, we were oppressed, and over-loaded with severities to an excess, beyond all bounds, (*καὶ υπερβύλας*) and more than, merely by our natural strength, we could ever have been able to bear; so that (*ἐξαρροβύρα ἡμετέρας*) we were in the utmost perplexity and danger, not knowing which way to turn ourselves; and as far as events could be judged of, by present appearances, we gave up all hope of escaping with our lives.

9 But God, in his Providence, suffered us to be reduced to such an extremity, as to conclude in our own minds, like persons under a sentence of death, that, in the ordinary way, we could never survive those cruelties, or evade the decree of our enemies against us, to the end that we might learn to live by faith, and not by sense; and, like *Abraham*, to believe in hope against hope; (*Rom. iv. 18.*) to have no confidence in, or dependence on, our own wisdom and strength, or on any interest that we could make with men, for our preservation and deliverance; but to place it intirely on the wisdom and power, faithfulness and goodness of that God, whose prerogative it is †, and who alone is able, not only to save from the most imminent danger, and rescue out of the jaws of death, but even to restore them to life that are actually dead, as he has shewn in several instances already, and will further shew in the general resurrection at the last day.

10 We were hereby taught to commit ourselves, and all our concerns for time, as well as eternity, to him, who, by wonderful appearances in the mount of difficulty, has interposed between us and death, when it was so visibly impending, and so formidably threatening, as, in all human views, to be absolutely unavoidable; who likewise continues daily to preserve us from the numerous dangers, that still surround us; and in whom, encouraged

#### N O T E S.

\* The 14th, 16th, and 19th chapters of the *Acts*, give us a large account of the great troubles, that the apostle met with in *Asia*; and he speaks in 1 Cor. xvi. 9. of many adversaries, and xv. 31. (See the note there) of fighting with the beasts at *Ephesus*, the Metropolis of that Province: but it is uncertain whether he here refers to the, or some later troubles that beset him in *Asia*, since he wrote his former epistle to

the *Corinthians*: However, his manner of representing them in this place shews, that they were exceeding dangerous and distressing.

† The apostle here plainly distinguishes the only true God from all others, by this peculiar prerogative of *raising the dead*; and therefore as Christ frequently speaks of raising the dead by his own power, proper deity must needs belong to him.

whom we trust that he will yet deliver me.

11 You also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards;

13 For we write none other things

encouraged by all this experience of our God and Father's care and kindness, we humbly trust and hope, that he will go on yet further to *deliver us from every evil work, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.* (2 Tim. iv. 18.)

11. And all this is, in a subordinate manner, owing to, and further hoped for from, the joint assistance of your earnest supplications at a throne of grace for us, in concurrence with our own, which he, who has styled himself a God hearing prayer, has graciously answered, and we trust will still do so; to the end that, as this blessing of a kind preservation and deliverance has been, and we believe will yet be freely bestowed upon us, for the good of multitudes, as well as of our own souls, by means of the prayers of many Christian friends that were concerned for us; so thanksgivings and praises may be likewise offered up to God by them, and by many other believers, on account of his signal favour therein shewn to us, that he may be abundantly glorified. And we cannot but persuade ourselves that we have had, and shall have an interest in your prayers on our behalf.

12 For, whatever any of our adversaries may invidiously suggest against us, as though we were self-seeking and designing men; and how great soever the troubles of various kinds, from friends and enemies, be, that attend us in our way and work; we have this satisfaction and joy, which rises up to a holy triumph, (καυχούμεθα) in our own bosoms, even the witness of our consciences, in every reflection upon our principles, temper and motives, views and conduct, that with an ingenuous undisguised candour and singleness of heart, free from all double dealing; and with integrity and uprightness of soul before God, in single aims at his glory agreeable to his holy nature and will; and not with the cunning artifices of carnal policy, or with selfish and secular designs and motives; but by a governing principle of grace, which God has wrought in us, and by the gracious guidance and assistance, which in his free favour, he continually affords us, we have conversed and behaved in the ministry, and in the general course of our lives, in the church and in the world, towards all that we have had to do with, and in a particular and remarkable manner toward you, with respect to every thing, that we have said or done to, or about you: And we cannot doubt but that ye must needs be well satisfied of this:

13 For what we now write to you about it is frankly and openly, neither more, nor less, than is signified by the

things unto you, than what you read or acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end.

the plain meaning of the words, which ye read in this, and in the former epistle; (1 Cor. i. 13, &c. ii. 1, &c. and iv. 1,—6.) or than ye yourselves know, and, as I hear to the joy of my heart, (*chap. vii. 6, 7.*) do own to be true concerning me, who chiefly mean myself in all that I have said about it; and I humbly hope, that, by the grace of God, (*ver. 12.*) my sincere behaviour toward you will henceforward be always so conspicuous, as to engage you to acknowledge the same continually, to the end of life.

14 As also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

14 Even as (*καθὼς καὶ*) the sound or better part of you (see the note on *Rom. xi. 25.*) have already owned, that I and my fellow-labourers, in planting the gospel among you, and being instrumental to your conversion and edification, are just matters of your rejoicing and glorying on our behalf; as ye also are of ours, on account of the gifts and graces bestowed upon you; and we trust will be so, as the seals of our ministry, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he will appear in all his glory to judge the world, at the last day.

15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that you might have a second benefit:

15 And being well satisfied concerning your good opinion of my integrity, and that our mutual rejoicings in each other would continue, I intended, and was very desirous to have come, and made you a second visit before now, that ye might have a further advantage for your establishment and joy, (*ver. 24.*) by my conversation and preaching, over and above what ye received, when I was formerly with you, and brought you to the knowledge of Christ.

16 And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judea.

16 And it was my real design, as I told you, (1 Cor. xvi. 5,—8.) not just to call upon you, which was all that I could have done in my journey to Macedonia, whither I was then going, ere long, from Ephesus; but to have passed by you in my way thither, and to have come back again to you in my return from that country, when I hoped to get an opportunity of spending more time with you; and then to have desired your assistance, and the company of some of you, to help me forward in my journey to Judea and Jerusalem. (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4.)

17 When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the

17 When therefore I first took up, and declared this my intention, which hitherto has not been accomplished, was it (as my adversaries would reproach me) with inconsiderate rashness and levity of mind, as not regarding what I said and did, and never concerning myself afterwards about it? Or did I mean one thing, and speak another, to compliment, flatter, and deceive you? Or did I alter my purpose without sufficient cause? Or as to such things, as I desire and propose to do, am I influenced

the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh; that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?

18 But, as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus, and Timothy, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen,

influenced and determined thereunto by carnal and secular considerations, or according to the dictates of the flesh, and of unrenewed men, who make no conscience of what they say, but talk backwards and forwards to serve a turn? Have I behaved at such a rate, as that, in my way of speaking, I should strongly affirm the same thing, at one time, with a yea, yes; and then roundly deny it at another, with a no, no? Far be it from me to think, speak, or act, after this inconstant and fallacious manner.

18 But, as certainly as God himself is true to his word and promise, I can appeal to him, that what I said, in that affair, was entirely consistent with truth; and was so far from admitting of an inference, which some would draw from it\*, as though my doctrine were likewise too uncertain to be depended upon; that, on the contrary, my preaching and writing to you, in which others of my brethren joined and agreed with me, have not been at one time an affirmation, and at another a denial of one and the same thing, after the manner of those, who, through falshood, or fickleness of temper, contradict themselves; but, through divine grace, it has always been steadily uniform, like him, who is the author, and subject of my ministry.

19 For as to the eternal Son of God, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, (Heb. xiii. 8.) even Christ the only Saviour, who has preached in his person and offices, crucifixion and benefits, among you, by us his servants, even by myself, and *Silas*, and *Timothy*, my dear companions in labour and travail: (*Acts* xv. 40. and xviii. 5.) He is not in himself, or in his word; and what we have said concerning him was not, now one thing, and then another of a contrary strain: But the doctrine which we preached, and constantly stood to in all our ministrations, was founded on him, as a crucified and risen Redeemer; and was, like himself, uniformly the same, with the highest demonstration of truth and certainty, according to the tenor of the gospel.

20 For all the great and precious promises of the covenant of grace, which are given forth by the unchangeable God, and are exhibited in the clearest light under the New Testament dispensation, are in Christ, *the amen, the faithful and true witness*, (Rev. iii. 14.) infal-

libly

#### N O T E.

\* It seems that the antagonists endeavoured to discredit his doctrine, under pretence that he was an inconstant man, who said and unsaid the same thing at different times, and so was not to be believed in what he taught: Therefore, to take off that impu-

tation, he solemnly appeals to God, that his preaching was all of a piece, invariably the same; and not at one time *yea, yes*, which was a strong form of affirming; and at another *no, nay*, which was a like form of denying.



unto the glory of God by us.

21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God:

22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

23 Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

24 Not for that

libly sure, and invariably the same; and are ratified and confirmed irrevocably by him, as they are all established, and put in force, by his death, that they may be effectually and completely fulfilled, in their proper time and order, to them that are savingly, called, (*Heb. ix. 15,—17.*) unto the praise and glory of the truth, faithfulness, and grace of God, by means of our ministrations.

21 And, (*4.*) as a further evidence of this, he that has strengthened, and settled us, who preach, and you who believe, that both one and the other may abide in the truth, as it is in Jesus, by virtue of our union with him, according to the promises; and he who has favoured us \* with a holy unction of the gifts and graces of the spirit, whereby we know, and receive all things necessary to salvation, (*1 John ii. 20, 27.*) is no other than the great God himself:

22 Who, answerable to various uses of a seal among men, has likewise graciously distinguished, marked, and secured us for his own; confirmed his covenant with us; assured us of our interest in it; and printed his holy image upon us: And he has freely given us his spirit, who dwells in our hearts, and sheds abroad his influences, and a sense of his love there, as a pledge and earnest of the eternal inheritance. (*Eph. i. 13, 14.*)

23 But to let you into one great reason of my not visiting you, so soon as was proposed †, I call the heart-searching, and sin-avenging God to witness, with all the solemnity of a religious oath, as ever I hope for his blessing on my soul here, and for ever, that it was not from any inconstancy of temper, or carnal motives; but out of peculiar tenderness to you, that I deferred my journey to *Corinth* thus long, as being desirous to come to you, not with a rod, but in love, and in the spirit of meekness ‡. (*1 Cor. iv. 21.*)

24 Yet I do not speak after this sort, as if we, who are

#### N O T E S.

\* As what the apostle here says about God's anointing, sealing, and giving the earnest of the spirit, is of much the same import, with what he and the apostle *Joba* speak of, as the common privileges of true believers, *Eph. i. 13, 14.* and *1 Joba ii. 10, 21.* I have referred all these passages to them, as well as to himself, and his fellow-labourers.

† Here the apostle insensibly slides back into his vindication of himself, from which he had a little digressed, in the four preceding verses, to give vent to some delightful thoughts on the stability of the promises of God, for helping his people's faith and joy.

‡ The apostle was willing to wait the event of his former epistle, with respect to the offenders among them, (*1 Cor. chap. v. vi.*) in hopes that they might be brought to repentance, and that the things, which were so much amiss among them, might be set to rights by the church itself; and he was very loth to use that apostolic severity in his proceedings against them, which, in case of continued dissension and obduracy, he threatened, (*1 Cor. iv. 19.*) and could not in faithfulness have avoided; and therefore he was the less in haste to go to *Corinth*. (*Chap. ii. 1.*)

we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

are Christ's ministring servants, had any right or authority to domineer over your faith, by arbitrarily binding any thing upon your consciences, according to our own fancy or humour; or by making any alterations in the doctrines and institutions of Christ, our only Lord and Master; but we are authorized of God, and do sincerely desire and endeavour, to be assistant to your spiritual consolation, by recovering you from those evils that would hinder it; and by establishing your faith in Christ, and in the promises, which are all *yea and amen in him*: (ver. 20.) For it is not by a human, but by a divine faith, which we would promote in you, that ye have hitherto stood (*ἵστασθε*) in a state of grace, and must continue to stand, as ever ye would be saved.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How important is it to the success of the gospel, that the characters of Christ's servants be blameless in themselves, and vindicated from false aspersions! And what a noble support and pleasure do they possess in their own souls, who have the testimony of their consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, they have their conversation in the world; and can make a solemn appeal to God about it, amidst all the reproaches of their enemies! They will ordinarily have a witness to their integrity, in the consciences of serious Christians; and blessed be the name of the Lord, that he will own and honour them, and act the part of the Father of Mercies, and the God and Father of Jesus Christ, their head and Saviour, by comforting them in all their tribulations, and proportioning their consolations to their sufferings, not only for their own personal advantage, but that they may the better know, by their own experience, how to speak seasonable words of relief to others in all their afflictions. Alas! How great and many are the troubles of God's own dear children! They sometimes grow to such an extremity, as to make them despair even of life: But their most sorrowful scenes are wisely, and graciously ordered for the trial and improvement of their faith, that a review of former dangers and deliverances may help to raise their hope in new difficulties, and teach them to renounce all confidence in themselves, and in creature-aids, and to rely intirely on that God, who raises the dead, who has delivered, and doth deliver, and in whom they may still trust for all further needful deliverances. And O how great is the power of prayer, especially of united prayers, for ushering in all seasonable mercies! And when God gives signal answers of peace, what abundant thanksgivings should we render to him!—How affectionately desirous are faithful ministers of their people's happiness! They earnestly wish that grace and peace may be multiplied to them, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; and they would fain be instruments both of their conversion and edification, that they may joy in them here, and rejoice with them in the day of Christ. For *this* they labour with constant care, and uniform aims, by dealing tenderly as possibly with them; by continuing to preach the same gospel, that was made effectual in their first believing; and by a noble ambition, not to lord it over their faith, but to be helpers of their joy. And O what blessed provision has God made for the present comfort, and everlasting salvation of every true believer! All the promises of the new covenant are ratified in Christ and made sure to them; they stand by faith, and are established in him; and they have the anointings of the spirit, who by his enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, seals and secures them unto the day of redemption, and is their earnest of the eternal inheritance.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle proceeds to a further account of the reasons of his not coming to the Corinthians, 1,—4. Gives them directions about restoring the incestuous person to his place in the church, 5,—11. And acquaints them with his own labours, success, and joys, in spreading the pure gospel of Christ in several places, 12,—17.*

## TEXT.

BUT I determin-  
ed this with  
myself, that I  
would not come  
again to you in  
heaviness.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS, in the greatness of my affection for you, my heart is chiefly set upon assisting your holy joy (*chap. i. 24.*) I was unwilling to come to you in circumstances, that might occasion your grief; but rather judged it most expedient, and accordingly concluded in my own mind, to forbear my second visit for some time\*, lest I should be obliged to go into such severities against the opposers of my apostolic doctrine and character, and against other offenders among you, as would be very unwelcome, and disagreeable to you and no less irksome to myself.

2 For if I make  
you sorry, who is  
he then that mak-  
eth me glad, but  
the same which is  
made sorry, by me?

2 For if I were to do any thing, that would be a trouble to you, whom I so dearly love, nothing but a sense of duty; and hope of rectifying what was amiss among you, could ever reconcile me to it, much less give me any satisfaction in it: And which of you, in that case, could exhilarate my spirit, and make me rejoice again; unless it were the very person or persons, whom I should have made uneasy by sharp rebukes, both of the principal offenders, and of others among you, that were puffed up, and countenanced them instead of mourning over them, and taking care to purge the church of them? (*1 Cor. v. 2. 7.*) It is only the repentance of such, and their recovery from the guilt, which they respectively had contracted, that could turn my own sorrow into joy.

3 And I wrote  
this same unto  
you, lest, when I  
came, I should  
have

3 And therefore, in my former letter, I wrote to you on this very point; (*1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5.*) † and what I have suggested in this epistle, (*chap. i. 23.*) about my not coming to you, that I might spare you, is to this very purpose, that the disorders in your church might be rectified by yourselves; lest otherwise in my coming to

## N O T E S.

\* The apostle was not with them in heaviness at the time of his going first among them, but with great rejoicing as appears from *chap. i. 24, 25.* and therefore his coming to them again, is not to be understood of his doing it again in heaviness, but only of his making them another visit.

† I am inclined to think that the apostle's saying, *I wrote to you*, refers to his former epistle; but as there is room to doubt, whether he might not mean something, that he had already wrote in a foregoing part of this epistle, I have taken both senses, with a due consistency, into the paraphrase.

have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice, having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.

to you, I should find such irregularities, and be forced to take such undesirable measures, as would create a great deal of uneasiness in my own mind, on their account, whom I might have reasonably expected to rejoice in; and who ought to have been matter of joy to me, by reason of their steadfastness in the faith, holiness, and order of the gospel: And I am encouraged to hope that ye would willingly save me this trouble, from the confidence I have in all those of you, who abide in the doctrines of Christ, that your regard and affection to me is sincere, according to your former professions, as that what is an occasion of pleasure and delight to me, with reference to the glory of Christ, and the good of the church, will be so likewise to all of you; and that therefore ye would be glad to remove every cause of disquietude to me.

4 For out of much affliction, and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.

4 For when I wrote to you before, to proceed to an excommunication of such, as were guilty of shameful miscarriages, and as discovered a disaffection to Christ and his gospel, (1 Cor. v. 4, 5. and xvi. 22.) it was with great trouble and distress of Spirit, which produced a flow of bitter tears, in reflection upon their deplorable and dangerous condition: I mention this now, not with a design of awaking any dolorous passions in you, with respect to things that are already mended; but only to let you see what an exceeding hearty love I bear to you, and what a touching concern I have for the good of the whole church, as well as for the humbling and reclaiming of the notorious delinquents themselves, to your comfort, and their own salvation.

5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me but in part: that I may not overcharge you all.

5 But if any one among you, (*τις τις*) as particularly the incestuous person, whom I ordered you to proceed against, has occasioned sadness of heart, on account of his crime, and of what ye were thereupon obliged, in duty to do to him, for vindicating the honour of Christ and purging the church from scandal; he, by that means, has given a great deal of uneasiness, not to me only\*, but to part of the church itself; I mean

to

#### N O T E.

\* 'Tis no easy matter to fix the just meaning of the latter part of this verse, as appears from the many different interpretations, that have been put upon it, which mostly confound, rather than direct the mind; and therefore I shall not trouble the reader with them. That, which is given in the paraphrase, seems to be more consistent with the *Grammar* of the text, and *sense* of the context, than any that I have met with; and I don't know what can be fairly

objected to it; since the words (*απο μέρους*) rendered *in part*, are most commonly used, in the apostle's writings, to distinguish one sort of persons from others; (see the note on Rom. xii. 15.) and since it may naturally be supposed, that he there designs to shew what he had said about the *Corinthians* being *put up*, and *not mourning*, 1 Epist. v. 2. that they might not think he meant it of them all universally.

to those of you, that were conscientiously concerned for God's glory, and the good of the man's own soul: I say it was a grief to such, that I may not be thought to exceed in my accusation of you, as a body as though I took all of you to be as unaffected with his case, as those were, whom I had in mine eye, when I reproved you for not mourning on his account, nor being ready to exclude him your holy communion.

6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

6 Ye having now discharged your duty in casting him out of the church, as my beloved brother *Titus* informs me; (*chap. vii. 6—13.*) and Christ having blessed his own institution for bringing him to repentance; this awful censure, which was passed upon him, by the suffrage and approbation of the whole community, or at least of the majority of the brotherhood, is all the rebuke and discountenance, that ye ought now to give him; it having proved sufficient, through divine grace to humble him, and so to answer its happy and desired end upon him.

7 So that contrariwise, ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

7. So that now, instead of carrying it shy and distant and dealing harshly with him, ye ought, on the contrary, to pass by his offence, as one, whom ye have ground, in the judgment of charity, to believe God himself has pardoned; and it is high time for you to encourage and comfort him, and so restore him to his church state among you, as one who has seen his sin, who loaths and abhors himself, and is deeply abased in his own eyes, and afflicted for it; and is enabled, to turn from it: the most gentle and compassionate methods should now be taken with him; lest, possibly one of so contrite a spirit, should be overwhelmed with the excessive distress of his mind, and sink into utter despair.

8 Wherefore I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love towards him,

8 I therefore would now become as zealous an advocate for this humble penitent, as I was before against him, while he persisted in his vicious course; I earnestly intreat, and exhort you (*παρακαλω*) to behave in such a friendly manner towards him as shall carry the plainest conviction, that your dealings with him, from first to last, have not proceeded from any hatred to his person, but only to his enormous crime, and from a sincere concern for his spiritual benefit; and I insist upon it, that, notwithstanding his great fall, ye would now demonstrate and ratify (*συνιστατε*) your love to him, in the most affectionate and public manner, by cordially receiving him again into your holy fellowship and performing all offices of kindness to him, as a restored brother.

9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgive anything, to whom I forgive it, for your sakes forgive I it, in the person of Christ:

11 Left Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

9 For this also is one great end that I have proposed to myself, both in writing to you before, to pass a just censure upon him, and now, to release him from it, (see the note on *ver.* 3.) that I might try, and see what evidence you would give of your regard to my apostolick authority; whether, or not, ye would own, and submit to it in all things, relating to discipline as well as doctrine.

10 And, (*scilicet*) to encourage your ready compliance with what I now recommend to you, ye may be well assured; that whomsoever, upon good proof given of his repentance, ye embrace with brotherly affection, and re-admit into fellowship with you, as one whom ye have forgiven, I likewise cheerfully concurring with you therein, pass by his offence; and, on supposition of the sincerity of his repentance, I solemnly pronounce him to be forgiven of God, who confirms in heaven, what his churches do, according to his mind and will, upon earth: (*Matth.* xviii. 18, and see the note on *Matth.* xvi. 19.) For whatever penitent among you he be, whom I in this manner have forgiven, it has been in the name, and by the authority of Christ, as therein personating him, and, as it were, before his face, in his sight and presence; (*εν προσωπῳ*) and I have done this, out of a special regard to you, that I might shew you my love, (*ver.* 4.) and my concern for your order, peace, and comfort; and that he might be satisfied, as to the warrantableness of your procedure in restoring such an one to the church.

11 I am the more solicitous about your receiving him again; lest our great adversary the devil, who envies the success of my ministry, the recovery of backsliders, and your edification and encrease, should prejudice any persons minds against us, and make them afraid of joining with us, for being of a rigid, unforgiving, and severe temper; or lest he should discourage any among yourselves, and hurry them into despair, or into apostacy; and so should, one way or other, overreach and circumvent us: For we have had so many proofs, and so much experience of his malicious designs, as have shewn us a great deal of his subtle stratagems, who, like an old serpent, lies in wait to deceive, and to obstruct the progress of the gospel, and the peace and prosperity of the church.

12 Now (*scilicet*) to acquaint you with another thing, that arose to retard my coming to *Corinth*, and yet shows my affection to you; when I went to *Troas*, in the lesser

12 Furthermore, when I came to *Troas*

*Treas* to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.

13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother; but, taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the favour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in

lesser *Asia*\*, to preach the gospel, which Christ has committed to me, and which principally treats of him, and of salvation alone by him; and when, at my arrival thither, I found the Lord Jesus had so disposed men's spirits, by restraining enemies, and inclining many to hear the word, that there was liberty and opportunity of preaching with hopeful prospects of success, I was induced to stay some time in those parts.

13 Nevertheless, such was my anxiety about you, that I could not be easy in my own mind, because I did not meet with my dear brother *Titus*, there, as I expected, that I might learn from him, what effect my former letter had upon you, and how things stood with you, as to your spiritual affairs; but taking my farewell of the church at that place, I travelled from thence into the province of *Macedonia* in search of him; where at length I found him, who gave me a very comfortable account of your humbleness of mind, and earnest desire to rectify what had been amiss; and of your affectionate dispositions toward me. (*chap. vii. 6, 7.*)

14 Now, blessed be the father of mercies, that notwithstanding the great opposition, and sore tribulations of various kinds, which have befallen me, and other fellow-labourers; he, in his wonderful condescension and grace, always gives us rich occasions for and carries our souls into a holy rejoicing in Christ, even unto exultation, as making us more than conquerors over all our enemies, through him, who has loved us, and is the glory of our ministry: And we can never be thankful enough to God, who not only reveals Christ by our ministrations; but makes his name and gospel exceeding precious and delightful, like the most fragrant ointment poured forth, which fills the air with a pleasant perfume, and is exceeding grateful to all within it's reach: And who makes our labours acceptable to himself, like odours of incense, and sacrifices of a sweet smelling Savour, through Jesus Christ, at *Corinth*, as well as among all sorts of people wheresoever we come.

15 For, in the faithful discharge of our commission, we are well pleasing to God, on Christ's account, and in the reference that our doctrine and services have to him; both with respect to those that are effectually wrought

# N O T E.

\* This journey to *Treas*, was not that mentioned in *Acts* xvi. 8. which was long before; nor was it that in *Acts* xx. 6, which was from *Philippi* in *Macedonia*; to *Treas* whereas this was from *Treas* to *Macedonia* (*ver. 13.*) But the generality of interpre-

ters think, that it was when the apostle passed from *Ephesus*, and took *Treas* in his way to *Macedonia*, *Acts* xx. 1: And if it was not then, we have no other account, in the *Acts* of the Apostles, to which it can be referred.

in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

wrought upon by it, and enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, as the glory of his *grace* is exalted in them; and with respect to those that reject the gospel, through their obstinacy and unbelief, to their own perdition, as the glory of his *justice* is displayed in them; and so he favourably accepts our labours in his Son, not according to their success, but according to our right principles, motives, and ends; diligence and integrity, in fulfilling them.

15 To the one we are the flavour of death unto death; and to the other the flavour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things?

16 To some indeed, (*οὐ μὴν*) as the sweetest scent is offensive and pernicious to persons that are sick, or that have an antipathy to it; so our preaching the pure gospel of Christ, which is excellent in itself, and highly acceptable to God, is disagreeable to their carnal minds, which are enmity against God; (*Rom. viii. 7.*) and (as though the gospel were like the ministration of the law, which kills instead of giving life, *chap. iii. 6*) it eventually increases their spiritual death and condemnation, even to eternal destruction, through the depravity of their own hearts, which obstinately reject, pervert and abuse it: But to others, (*οὐ δὲ*) it is a reviving and delightful odour, which through the attending power of the spirit, recovers them from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness, and continues to be a sweet refreshment to them afterwards, under all their soul-sicknesses and faintings, troubles and trials, till it issues in their complete enjoyment of eternal life. How affecting and important are these events of our ministry! and how great is the difficulty of fulfilling it, in a wise and faithful manner, with an humble, holy, and disinterested zeal for the glory of Christ, the manifestation of the truth to the consciences of our hearers, and the good of immortal souls; and with a suitable address to different persons and cases, that every one may have his portion in due season! what vain pretender, like your false teachers, can be fit to engage in this arduous and solemn service? Nay, who of himself, be he the best and greatest man upon earth, (*chap. iii. 5.*) is equal to it, and capable of going through it, with such a temper of spirit, as becomes him; and to such advantage, as is most desirable? And yet I say that our faithful labours are acceptable to God in Christ, whatever the issues of them may be to others.

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as

17 For we are not like many of the *judaizing* teachers who adulterate, and debase the pure and glorious gospel of the blessed God, by mingling legal observances, and human inventions with it, to serve their own pride and avarice, as *vintners* corrupt their neat wines



as of sincerity, but  
as of God, in the  
light of God speak  
we in Christ.

wines, (*κεραιωματα*) by injurious mixtures for the sake of gain: But we preach the true and genuine gospel of Christ intire, just as we received it from him, without any alterations, additions, or secular views, as with an honest plain heartedness, free from craft, or deceit; (*chap. iv. 2.*) and as by the authority, guidance, and influence of God himself; and, in all our discourses, we speak conscientiously, as in the sight and presence of the omniscient God, looking for all acceptance with him; in and through the great Mediator, who is the governing subject of our ministry.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a tender love and concern have faithful pastors for their flocks! They are exceeding solicitous about their affairs; they make their sorrows and joys their own, and are willing to keep up as good an opinion of them, as possible; they are grieved at heart, when any of them fall into sin, and persist with such obstinacy in it, as to oblige the church to cast them out of it's communion; they are earnestly desirous that such offenders may be brought to repentance, and, upon good evidence that they are so, would have them restored to the fellowship, and affection of the whole community, lest they should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. And why should not churches take off their censures, when the proper ends, for which they were inflicted, are answered? To be unforgiven to those, whom we have ground to hope God has pardoned, is a disobedience to Christ's authority; and gives Satan an advantage against the humble penitent, to drive him to despair; and against the church, to bring an odium upon it, as though it were uncharitably severe. And alas! How many are the wiles of the devil, for supplanting the cause of Christ, which it is our wisdom and duty to observe, and guard against! But blessed be God, who will make his precious gospel triumphant, to the joy of his servants, whose consciences bear witness to their integrity, in defiance of all opposition; and will take pleasure in it's ministrations, whether they issue in the righteous destruction of those, whose carnal hearts are averse to it; or in the spiritual life and eternal salvation of those, that believe through grace. O how awful, on one hand; how delightful, on the other; and how difficult and important, on the whole, is the work of the ministry! We may well cry out, who is sufficient for these things? And if any are wise and faithful stewards in dispensing them, and *that* with good effect, it is all of God. Wo be it to those, the number of which is too great, that corrupt the simplicity of the gospel; but they who, through divine light and influence, preach and maintain the purity of it's doctrines, according to the word of God; as in the integrity of their hearts, with disinterested views, and as under his all-seeing eye, may be humbly confident, for their encouragement, that whether their success be more or less, they and their labours shall be graciously accepted of him in the beloved.

### C H A P. III.

*The apostle appeals to the Corinthians for the good effects of his ministry upon them, the glory of which he ascribes intirely to God, 1,—5. Shews the preference of the gospel to the legal administration, 6,—11. And that his preaching it was suitable to it's excellency and evidence, and had an enlightening and transforming efficacy, through the power of the holy Ghost 12,—18.*

## TEXT.

DO we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letter of commendation from you?

1 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered

## PARAPHRASE.

DO we, the Ministers of Christ; and particularly, do I myself, who am chiefly struck at by the false apostles, and speak with a special eye to my own just and necessary vindication\*; Do we I say now again begin, like vain glorious persons, to set out our own praises, by avowing our sincerity and fidelity, (*chap. ii. 17.*) as some may censure us for having done before, in the former epistle, *chap. iv*? No, we are far from seeking glory of men; (*1 Thess. ii. 6.*) but it is for your, and the gospel's sake, that we say any thing of that aspect: (*chap. v. 12.*) Or do we stand in need, as the false apostles do, of any letters of recommendation from other churches, to ingratiate ourselves with you! Or have we any occasion for your giving us a good character, to introduce us to the favour of others? No, we neither ask, nor need any such thing of you, or them.

2 Ye yourselves, the dear seals of our ministry, (*1 Cor. ix. 2.*) are our letters testimonial, every way better, and more convincing in themselves, and more desirable in our account, than the highest encomiums, that words could heap upon us; testimonials so deeply impressed on our hearts, that we can never forget them, nor think of them without joy and praise; and so evident to all around you, that they cannot but be legible, and known amongst all, that are acquainted with you, or have heard of God's remarkable work, through our labours, upon you.

3 For, by the gifts and graces bestowed upon you, ye are openly manifested to be Christ's own epistle, which he has formed, and published to the world, by means of our ministrations in his name; an epistle written, not with ink, like those which the false apostles want from you, and which are the only ones, that ye could write for them, or us; but an epistle formed by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, who is essentially one with the Father and Son, as a man's soul is with himself †, and is the Spirit of the only true God, who

## NOTES.

\* Though the apostle principally intends himself, as most directly affected by the reproaches of his adversaries, and vindicated against them; yet he seems to include his brethren, such as Timothy, Silvanus, and Titus, who are mentioned, *chap. i. 1, 19,* and *ii. 13.* partly to serene himself from envy, and partly to defend their characters together with his own.

† That Christ is included in the living God here mentioned, appears not only from the Spirit's being in other places styled the Spirit

of Christ, as well as of the Father; but likewise from the Corinthians being called in the former part of this verse, the epistle of Christ, as the proper author of it; in distinction from the ministerial concern, that the apostle had in forming it: And since the Spirit is here spoken of, as the immediate divine agent, who wrote this loving epistle, we are also to consider him as essentially one with, though personally distinct from, the Father and Son. (See the note on *1 Cor. ii. 11*.)

ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

who has life necessarily in himself, and is the fountain and giver of it to others; and an epistle written, not like the moral law of ten commandments in tables of stone; (*Exod. xxiv. 12, and xxxiv. 1.*) nor in unregenerate hearts, that are dead and senseless, obdurate and unyielding, as a stone; but in the tender and pliant, living and sensible tables of your souls, which, being renewed by grace, are made susceptible and retentive of every spiritual and holy impression, according to the new covenant promise, that God will take away the stony heart out of his peoples flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh. (*Ezek xxxvi. 26.*)

4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward.

4 And we have hope toward God, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, that this happy effect, according to the promise, is indeed wrought in you; and that our ministry shall still be owned of him, and made successful, in producing the same good effect upon many others to his glory and the further vindication of our character.

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God:

5 Not that we assume any honour to ourselves? no, we frankly acknowledge that, as to any ability of our own, if left to ourselves, we, like other men, are utterly incapable of so much, as thinking one truly good and spiritual thought\*; much less are we able, of ourselves, (*λογισομαι*) to reason at such a rate, as shall be effectual to the conversion of others: But all our sufficiency or fitness, for one and the other, is entirely and alone of God, by the operation of his Spirit in us, and with us: We therefore humbly rely upon him for it, and ascribe the glory of it all to him.

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but

6 Who has graciously furnished us with every needful qualification, and gives us all seasonable assistances, to make us faithful, and successful ministers of the gospel, which exhibits the new covenant, in its utmost evidence, freeness, and fulness, as it is now confirmed by the death of Christ; ministers, I say, not of the *law*, which the *judaizing* teachers are so fond of, and which may be called *the letter*, in allusion to God's *literally* writing its moral precepts by his own finger, or extraordinary power; (*Exod. xxxi. 18. and Deut. ix. 10.*) and to intimate the weakness of the then present dispensation, as in itself a dead letter: But he has made us Ministers of the *gospel*, which was not only indited by, but

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle seems to argue from the less to the greater; If they were not sufficient of themselves to do so small a thing, as to think a good thought, that should be pleasing to God, and beneficial to their own souls much less could they inspire others with such

thoughts, and produce an effectual and thorough change in their hearts, by all their own reasoning with them; but all must be entirely owing to the power of God as working in and by them.

but of the spirit : for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.

but is likewise accompanied with the holy Spirit, as the means by which he works, and in the dispensation of which he is given, to make it efficacious to saving purposes; and therefore takes its denomination of *spirit* from him, in opposition to the law, which was, in great measure at least, destitute of his energy \*: For *the law itself*, by shewing a man his duty, and giving him no assistance to perform it, and yet condemning him for every defect, destroys all hope of salvation, and binds him over to destruction, while he continues under it: But the *gospel*, attended with the light and agency of the Holy Spirit, is the means of making dead sinners alive to God, and of bringing them into a state of acceptance with him to eternal life.

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away;

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

7, 8. And (1<sup>st</sup>) if the law, which was in itself an administration that tended to death, and issued in endless destruction to all, that were left under it, without looking any further; and which was written (*в урании*) in letters of God's own forming, and engraven on tables of stone; if this law was delivered with a glory, (*в славе*) when God appeared in awful solemnity at mount Sinai, and conversed with *Moses* in such an immediate manner, as impressed so shining a glory upon his countenance, that, when he returned to the people, its lustre was too dazzling for the *Israelites* to look upon it with steadfastness, because of the more than human brightness, that was shed upon it: which brightness was to last but a little while, to intimate that the dark dispensation, they were then under, must continue, till the accomplishment of its prefigurative design in Christ: If, I say, there was such a visible glory in this terrible dispensation, and such an honour was put upon *Moses* in ministering it, how much greater glory, of a spiritual nature, must there be in the delightful dispensation of the gospel, which is attended with the enlightning and quickning, sanctifying, and saving operations of the blessed spirit; and is the means, by which his gifts and graces are conveyed to them that believe? And how much more excellent

#### N O T E.

\* It is apparent to me, that by the letter as in Rom. ii. 27. so here, the apostle means the legal dispensation, which he afterwards calls the ministration of death, and condemnation, ver. 7. 9; and that by Spirit, he means the gospel dispensation, which he calls the ministration of the Spirit, and of righteousness, ver. 8. 9: For he all along sets one of these in opposition to the other; the first of which may be called the letter, and the second, the Spirit, for reasons given in the paraphrase: But though by the letter, and the ministration of death, and condemnation, he seems most

immediately to point at the moral law, together with it's curse, as woven into that administration; yet he designed to include the whole of the *Mosaic* or legal dispensation. For when in another view he speaks of it as that which is done away, and was represented by the veil which *Moses* put on his face ver. 11. 13, he most directly intends the ceremonial law; and so considers the *Old Testament*, ver. 14; or the whole of the *Jew's* dispensation, as obscure, and insufficient in itself, for bringing in righteousness unto them in opposition to the gospel administration.

cellent and amiable must the glory be, which it puts upon the Ministers, who are qualified and authorized to preach it, and upon those that by faith receive it, and are themselves transformed into its glorious likeness? (*ver. 18.*)

9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glorious, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

9 For if there was such a glory, as we plainly see there was a very awful one, in the ministry that left the people under a sentence of condemnation; surely then, the ministry of the gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed, for the justification of every true believer in Christ; and by means of which, faith itself, whereby we believe unto righteousness, is wrought in the heart; (*Rom. i. 17, and x. 4, 10, 17.*) this illustrious and powerful ministry must needs be as much more abundantly transcendent in its endearing excellence and honour, as the divine glory, which shines forth in righteousness to eternal life, surpasses that, which is displayed in condemnation to eternal death.

10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

10 For even the legal dispensation, divinely glorious as it appeared to be in the external manner of its majestic introduction at mount Sinai, loses all its lustre, and fades away, like a lesser light at the rising of a greater, and admits of no comparison with the gospel dispensation of light and grace, because of the superabundant and permanent glory of this, beyond that.

11 For if that which is done a way was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

11 For if there really was a glory in the Old Testament-dispensation, which, on account of its weakness and imperfection, is now set aside, and brought to its period; much more must the New Testament-dispensation which is so excellent in itself, and introduces a kingdom which cannot be moved, (*Heb. xii. 28.*) but shall abide without any alteration of its privileges and ordinances to the end of time, be truly, emphatically, and beyond all comparison, glorious.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.

12 Being therefore, upon these considerations, fully persuaded of the superior worth and excellency of the gospel, above the legal dispensation; and having an humble confidence in the Lord, that he will make it effectual to the salvation of many souls; we are emboldened to use great freedom, openness and plainness in our way of preaching the word of his grace, without any shyness, fear, or disguise, on one hand: or any embellishment of human art, and oratory, as though they were needful to recommend it, on the other.

13 And as *Moses*, which put a veil over his face, that

13 And we don't go about in any manner to hide or conceal its intrinsic, native beauties, as *Moses* covered his face with a veil, to hide the bright shining of his countenance from the view of the *Israelites*; he there-  
by

that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.

by intimating, in an emblematical way, that partly through the obscurity of the dispensation they were under, and partly through the carnality of their own hearts, they could not look through it, and behold by a steady faith it's true and ultimate scope and design; or take in clear conceptions of the antitype and substance of those legal types and shadows, which are now no longer to be used in religious worship, as having been fulfilled in Christ.

14 But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

14 But their intellectual powers (*εραπειν*) were stupefied and blinded; their hearts, being as hard, as the tables of stone, on which the moral law was written, (*ver. 7.*) and their thoughts as obscure, as the types and shadows, which referred to the things of the gospel: (*ver. 1\**.) And though that gloomy dispensation is now brought to an end, and succeeded by one more excellent, which explains it; yet the *subjective* darkness of the minds of the unbelieving *Jews*, who still adhere to it, effectually hinders their discerning the great and glorious things intended, and prefigured by it: For to this very day, the same veil of ignorance and blindness still covers their understandings, when they read the Old Testament writings, as if the object lay as much concealed, as ever, under the veil of distant predictions, and obscure types and figures\*. This *objective* veil is now removed by the coming of Christ, and by the clear explications of the New Testament, which shew how exactly and completely all is fulfilled, by what he has done and suffered, who is *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*; (*Rom. x. n.*) and the *subjective* veil itself is taken off from the minds of true believers, by the illumination of his Spirit, to lead them into the knowledge of Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when  
Moses

15 But I say, with respect to the unbelieving carnal *Jews*, that even to this very day, amidst so clear a revelation of the object itself in gospel light, there still remains such an internal darkness upon their understandings, through their own pride, lusts, and prejudices, hardness of heart, and fondness for ceremonial observances, and for setting up a righteousness, of their own, as makes them so incapable of perceiving things in a just light, that when the law of *Moses* is read, as it is in their synagogues every sabbath-day, (*Acts xv. 21.*) they

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle manifestly speaks in this discourse of a double veil, which spread over the *Israelites*, and might be figuratively indicated by the veil on the face of *Moses*, *ver. 13.* one *internal* on their minds, as they were blinded; and the other *external* on the

object itself, as *that* was hid under types and figures. The first of these is certainly intended, *ver. 15, 16.* and in the former part of this verse; but both may be included in the last clause, as also in *ver. 12.* according to the sense given in the paraphrase.

Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

they can no more discern its true and spiritual meaning, in its reference to Christ, than the *Israelites* could see through the veil on their typical Mediator's face, or could steadfastly behold the glory of his countenance, when the veil was removed from it, at the delivering of the law.

16 Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

16 Nevertheless, as *Moses* took the veil off from his face, when he turned from the people to go in before the Lord; (*Exod. xxxiv. 34.*) so when ever the happy time shall come, for the body of that people to be nationally converted to the Lord Jesus; or when any of their hearts (*ver. 15.*) shall be effectually wrought upon, by his spirit, to turn to him, and receive him by faith, as the only true Messiah, then that *internal veil* shall be taken off, as the external one is already; so that the eyes of their understandings shall be enlightened to see how all the types, figures, and predictions of the law have a complete and glorious accomplishment in Christ.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.

17 Now the Lord Jesus, who will take away this internal veil, which lies upon their hearts, is himself in his divine nature, by way of eminence, *a spirit*, as God is said to be; (*John iv. 24.*) and, in his office capacity, he is *a quickning spirit*, (*1 Cor. xv. 45.*) and *the words that he speaks are spirit and life*; (*John vi. 63.*) he having power in himself to *quicken whom he will*, (*John v. 21.*) and to convey the holy Spirit, for making dead souls live, by means of the gospel: And wherever this divine Spirit of the Lord Jesus dwells, by way of peculiar relation and vital operation in any soul, there is a blessed freedom from the darkness that had overspread its mind, and from the bondage of the legal administration; and a correspondent freedom from the guilt and power of sin, and from the curse and condemnation of the law and, in consequence of all this, there is a holy and delightful liberty of spirit, in its access to God, and communion with him, as a reconciled God and Father.

18 But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, *even*

18 And (*2d*) all of us who believe in Christ, and have his spirit dwelling in us, being brought into the open light and full liberty of the gospel-state, and being delivered from that ignorance and blindness, which before covered our minds; now behold by faith the unveiled glory of the Lord Jesus, in whom all the law is fulfilled, and all the divine perfections are illustriously displayed, and harmoniously exalted: And as the face of *Moses* shone with a heavenly likeness, by the impression which he received in seeing the glory of God

seen as by the Spirit of the Lord.

God; (ver. 7.) so, by the clear view which Faith gives us of Christ's glory in the gospel, as in a mirror or looking-glass, which distinctly represents the very image of things in opposition to the dark hints under the law, which were, at best, but an obscure shadow of them \*, we are effectually transformed into Christ's own amiable and holy likeness, by a progression from the glory of the Old Testament to the much brighter glory of the New, (ver. 7,—11.) and by a glory reflected upon us, and derived to us, from his glory; and that from one degree of grace and holiness to another, in proportion to the strength and clearness of this realizing view, which is glory begun; and from the beginnings of this divine work upon earth, to the completing of it in heaven, which is grace perfected in glory: And all this is effected by the peculiar agency and impression of the Lord, the Spirit, (*Κυριῷ πνεύματι*;) who is himself a divine person, and comes as the spirit of the Lord Christ to glorify him, by means of gospel ministrations. (*John xvi. 14.*)

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Blessed be God, that our lot is cast under the gospel-state, which so vastly, and beyond all comparison, excels the legal dispensation in glory: *That* of the law was terrible, but *this* of the gospel is amiably glorious; *that* was full of darkness and bondage, but *this* is full of light and holy liberty: *that* was a ministration of death and condemnation, but *this* of spiritual life, and of righteousness, through Jesus Christ, to eternal life; *that* was typical and figurative, but *this* brings in the substance, which answers all that was typified by those obscure modes of instruction, and

#### N O T E.

\* As a shadow gives us a much more indistinct and imperfect representation of a person, than his image doth, the law is said to have a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of them; (*Heb. x. 1.*) and as seeing a man's face in a looking glass gives us a vastly better idea of him, than any shadow in the world could do, the light of the gospel dispensation is here spoken of as beholding with open face in a glass; but as looking directly on a person's face gives us as much better notion of him, than merely seeing it in a glass, and is indeed the most exact and perfect way, in which he can be known; the light of heaven is set out, *1 Cor. xiii. 12* (see the note there) as seeing face to face, and knowing as we are known, and that in opposition to our seeing in a glass, which, compared with the heavenly vision, is but darkly; though, compared with the great obscurities of the legal dispensation, it is seeing with open face, and without a veil; and so this is a beautiful description of the light of the gospel as exceeding that of the law, but falling vastly short of that, which we shall have in heaven.—The connection of this with the foregoing verse naturally leads us to ap-

prehend, that when the apostle says, we all with open face behold, &c. he don't mean only himself and other ministers, (see the note on ver. 1.) but all true believers, or all, whom he had been just speaking of, that turn to the Lord, have his spirit and are let into the liberty of the gospel; and what he here affirms concerning this all is no more, than is included in this liberty, and belongs, as a common privilege and blessing, to every true believer under the gospel state. And, methinks, those paraphrasts, who, all along before and after this verse, consider *we* and *us*, as signifying only the apostle himself, and accordingly render them *I* and *me*, should be ready to allow that by *we* all he means something different, so as to include the Christians he wrote to, and those whom he had just before been describing, as well as the inspired ministers of the gospel; and whenever he speaks in the plural number of things, they are common to faithful ministers and other believers, or that go into the Christian privilege and character, as such, I cannot see why we should not take them in an extensive view, as including both.



and therefore *that* was to last only for an appointed season, but *this* has abolished it, and excels in duration, as well as in many other respects, it being to continue to the end of time, till it shall issue in all the glory of the better world. What an honour is it to be put into, and made faithful and successful in, such a glorious ministry as this! Who is sufficient for it of himself, or for so much as thinking any thing relating to it, with spiritual advantage to himself, or others? All sufficiency of this kind is intirely of God; and all its saving effects are wrought by his spirit, who impresses his word with life, energy, and abiding characters on new hearts, which from hearts of stone are turned into hearts of flesh, and become the living epistles of Christ, that are legible to all around them, and are, though not singly and alone, yet the most noble and delightful seals and testimonials, that can be given to ministerial labours. But alas! What will this excellent and glorious dispensation of light and grace avail those, that still remain under their native and contracted blindness, and chosen hardness of heart? How clearly soever the light may shine round about them, the internal veil upon their minds is a darkness that comprehends it not. But, adored be the riches of God's grace, there is room for hope, that, by the power of his Spirit, the *internal* veil itself may be removed; and when we are truly converted to the faith of Christ, by the enlightning and heart changing operation of his divine spirit, it is removed, and we are admitted to all the liberties, privileges, and blessings of the New Testament-state; and while with unveiled face, like that of *Moses*, when he appeared before the Lord, we by faith behold, in the clear glass of gospel revelation, the glory of the Lord Jesus, as a divine Saviour, and as the fulfiller of the law, we shall be moulded into his holy likeness from one degree of grace to another, till we arrive at eternal glory, by the transforming impression of gospel-truths upon our hearts from the Lord, the Spirit.

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle, animated by a consideration of the excellency and power of the gospel-ministry, declares that he and his fellow-labourers discharged it with unwearied diligence, sincerity, and faithfulness, though not with equal success to all, 1,—7. That their sufferings for it were exceeding great, and yet attended with rich supports, and various advantages, 8,—12. And that their prospects of eternal glory were their chief preservative against fainting under their tribulations. 13,—18.*

## TEXT.

Therefore seeing  
we have this  
ministry, as we  
have received  
mercy, we faint  
not:

## PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore a dispensation of the gospel, which is so glorious in itself, and so efficacious and transforming in the hearts of true believers, by the attending power of the spirit, is committed to me and my fellow-labourers; we are animated, according to the grace bestowed upon us, and the compassion our God has shewn us, under all our weaknesses and trials, to go on in the discharge of our important trust, without despondency, cowardize, or flinching, amidst all the tribulations and reproaches, that we are loaded with for Christ's sake.

2 But have re-  
nounced the hid-  
den things of dis-  
honesty, no walk-  
ing

2 But, notwithstanding the many temptations to the contrary, that be set us, we have abanended with abhorrence, and kept at the remotest distance from all secret, dishonourable, and shameful tricks and contrivances, that

ing in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

that will not bear the light; such as the false teachers go into, to conceal themselves and their designs; but would be matter of disgrace to us, as they really are to them: We do not, like them, behave with slyness and subtilty, to over-teach and ensnare the souls of our hearers by false pretences; but with great simplicity and open freedom, to lead them into the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; nor do we corrupt and falsify (*μη δολωτες*) the pure word of God, by any additions or alterations of our own, or by attempting to accommodate it to the depraved taste of those that we minister to: But, in preaching the truth of the gospel, and nothing but what we believe to be so, we endeavour, as upright and faithful stewards; to approve ourselves to the consciences of every one, that would judge impartially concerning us, as in the sight and presence of God; and we do this, as considering ourselves to be always under the critical inspection of his all-seeing and heart-searching eye, to whom we must one day give an account of ourselves, and of our ministry.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

3 But if after all this plain and faithful publication of the gospel, which indeed is not ours, as though we were the inventors and authors of it, or enforced it by our own authority, but the ministry of which we have received from Christ: (*ver. 1.*) if, I say, this excellent and glorious gospel is nevertheless covered, or concealed from the minds of any that hear it, so that they cannot understand or receive it, by means of that veil of ignorance and blindness, which remains on their hearts; (*chap. iii. 15.*) it is thus hid only from them, that still continue in the lost and perishing condition, into which they were plunged by the fall, and in which they abide by their own wilful obstinacy and unbelief, and, persisting therein, must be inevitably lost and undone for ever.

4 In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the

4 In these unhappy creatures, their great adversary the Devil, who is worshipped by the idolatrous *Gentiles* as their God, and is tamely submitted to, and served by, men of carnal minds, whom he tempts, as he presumed to do our blessed Lord himself, with the things of this world, as though they were all at his own disposal: (*Matth. iv. 8, 9.*) in these, I say, the great Ruler of the darkness of this world (*Eph. vi. 12.*) has had a malignant influence, to increase, and confirm the blindness and stupidity of their minds, who remain in unbelief; he powerfully works in these children of disobedience, (*Eph. ii. 2.*) by allurements and terrors, and by every false suggestion and delusion, to thicken the darkness

the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

ness of their understandings, and lead them into wrong notions about the things of God, and their own eternal interests: And so, for fear of losing his vassals, he doth his utmost to keep them under the power of darkness, lest the conspicuous discovery, that is made of the glory of Christ (*τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ*) in the gospel, as in a glass, (*chap. iii. 18.*) should make its way through the veil of their own natural blindness, and should illuminate and change their minds and hearts, by the knowledge and faith of him, who, in his divine nature, is the essential image of God the Father, and in the constitution of his person God-Man in his representative image; and in whom, as Mediator, all the divine perfections appear to be unitedly exalted, and illustriously displayed with amiable harmony: It is not therefore owing to any defect in the gospel itself, or in our way of preaching it, but only to the criminal disorder in their own minds, which Satan makes an advantage of, that unbelievers do not perceive, nor are affected with its glory.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.

5 For, as to us, the ministers of this blessed gospel, we do nothing to hide it, or cast a veil over it, by endeavouring to promote our own honour or interests, authority or inventions, passions or prejudices; but we preach its pure doctrine with all possible plainness, in its full light and glory, relating to the person and offices righteousness, grace, and government of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners, and Lord of all: And we frankly own ourselves to be no more than servants, that are called to study your weaknesses and wants, temptations and dangers, and to labour, by all proper means, for the relief, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of your souls, in love to Christ and you, and in obedience to his commands, and for advancing his kingdom and glory among you.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined

6 For God, who in the creation of this world said, *let there be light, and there was light*, (*Gen. i. 3.*) and so by his own powerful and efficacious word, caused light to shine out of the dark chaos: this God, in the new creation, while the thickest darkness of a spiritual nature was spread over our own and others souls, has shone by a special illumination of his spirit in our hearts \*, as also in the hearts of all that believe, to enlighten us with discoveries of his glorious Being and perfections

#### N O T E.

\* This *shining in our hearts*, stands opposed to the God of this world's *blinding the minds* of them that believe not, *ver. 4.* which shews that, though it relates primarily to the apostles, it is likewise to be extended to pri-

vate christians, even to all those, whose minds the God of this world doet not continue to blind, and who are God's *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* *Eph. ii. 10.*

shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

sections, counsels, and will, relating to the way of salvation; as they are manifestly displayed, with the brightest and most endearing lustre, in the person and mediation of Jesus Christ, who is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*; (Heb. i. 3.) and in whom his glory is not covered under a veil, as that which shone in the face of *Moses* was; (*chap. iii. 13.*) but is openly manifested in the clear representation, that is now made of it by the gospel.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

7 But how wonderful is the wisdom and condescension of God, in his way of dealing with men! This noble treasure of evangelical truth and grace is, put into us, and dispensed by us, who dwell in frail, contemptible, and perishing bodies, which are but like the *earthen pitchers* of *Gideon's* soldiers, that contained lighted lamps, (*Judg. vii. 16.*) or like mean brittle caskets, that hold the most precious jewels; God so ordering it, that (*ὡς ὑπερβολή*) the superabundance and invaluable excellence of the divine energy, which makes his word effectual for the illumination and conversion of lost sinners, might appear with the greater evidence and certainty; and might be the more readily believed and acknowledged, to be intirely owing to his gracious supernatural operation by his spirit: and not at all to our wisdom and learning, parts and eloquence; nor to any power that can be exerted by such weak and mortal creatures as ourselves, who are attended with many corporal sufferings, which are the tokens of our own frailty, and under which nothing less than the almighty power of God, could support and preserve us; as to instance in some of them.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair;

8 We are pressed with afflictions and tribulations from all quarters, in various ways, and by all manner of means, that men or devils can invent and inflict upon us; but, blessed be God, in the midst of them all, (*ὡς στυγερὰ μάλιστα*) we are not cramped in our own spirits, nor oppressed with anxiety of mind, like persons that are at their wit's end, and have no hope or help in the Lord; nor are we thrust into corners to hinder our further publication of the gospel, or so shut up, as to find no way of escape: We are sometimes doubtful about what course we should take in present dangers, and what further trials may befall us; but are not suffered to distrust, much less to despair of the wisdom and power, goodness and faithfulness of our God to uphold us under, carry us through, and, in due time, deliver us out of all our troubles, and to make them work together for our own, and his people's good.

9 Persecuted,  
but not forsaken;  
cast down, but  
not destroyed;

9 We are persecuted for righteousness sake, in our persons, characters; liberties, and properties, by all the methods of reproach and violence, that wicked men can furnish out against us; but are not left to ourselves or deserted and abandoned of our God; we are not deprived of his consolations, nor disowned of him, who bears witness to our own souls, and to the world, of his gracious approbation of us: We in our wrestlings against flesh and blood, as well as principalities and powers, (*Eph. vi. 12.*) are sometimes, through the workings of human fears, dejected, foiled, and thrown down, like wrestlers in the public games; but we rise again by faith, and neither we, nor our cause are slain, or defeated, as though we had lost the victory, or were ourselves lost, (*ὡς ἀπολλυμένοι*) as the impenitent and unbelieving are. (*ver. 3.*)

10 Always bearing  
about in the  
body the dying of  
the Lord Jesus,  
that the life also of  
Jesus might be  
made manifest in  
our body.

10 In our daily combats we, like the boxers in the *Grecian* games, undergo such hardships and severities, and retain such marks of them in our mortal bodies on account of our faith in a crucified Jesus, as carry plain and visible resemblances of the wounds of our dying Lord and Saviour, who was cruelly buffeted and beaten by his enemies, when they were going to put him to death, and who sympathizes with all his members in their sufferings for his sake, and counts them his own; and we, by our fellowship with him in the virtue of his death, are enabled to bear them with faith and patience constancy and courage, in conformity to him, and for his glory, that the reality and power of the life also, to which the blessed Jesus was raised, might be illustriously displayed, by animating us with holy fortitude and vigour, to bear up under all our sufferings on his account, in these frail and perishing bodies.

11 For we which  
live are alway de-  
livered unto death  
for Jesus sake, that  
the life also of Je-  
sus

11 For we who live spiritually, by quickening influence from him, as our vital head, and in conformity to him, as our great exemplar, and who, by help obtained from him, continue corporally alive to this very day, are perpetually betrayed and delivered up, by our restless adversaries, into the hands of the secular powers or of the outrageous populace; and so are surrounded with dangers, and exposed to death itself, for preaching and professing our faith in Christ, as the only Saviour; all which is designed, permitted and over-ruled by the providence of God, to this end, that our wonderful preservation and deliverance from the jaws of death and our continuing, notwithstanding all this, to preach the gospel with divine energy, might be an evident demonstration of the great power and glory, to which our living

us might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

ing Redeemer is risen from the dead; and that his holy and heavenly life might be conspicuously exemplified in us, by his enabling us to hold fast our faith, and hold on our way, with humble submission patience, and undaunted resolution, in imitation of him, amidst all the infirmities and oppressions, that attend our abode in mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

12 So that we, his ministering servants, are exposed to all manner of distresses, and dangers of death, in every form that is hideous to human nature; but ye, my christian friends, dwell in safety, and enjoy all the comforts of this life; and the troubles, that we endure in preaching the gospel, and for the confirmation of it are, by the power of Christ, turned into means of spiritual and eternal life to you that believe, as well as to ourselves.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak;

13 But (sc) how great soever the difference in outward circumstances be, which may occasion contempt from the men of this world to us, and honour to you; yet as we are animated by the same lively principle of faith which is wrought by the holy Spirit in us and in you\*, as it also was, by the same Spirit, in the Old Testament Saints, according to what is written by one of them, who even while he personated Christ himself, with respect to the great troubles and dangers that encompassed him, said (*Psal. cxvi. 6.*) I believed what God revealed and promised, and found that it was not in vain; and therefore have I declared it, to the glory of his mercy, power, and faithfulness, and for the encouragement of others: So we in like manner believe in Christ according to the revelation, that is now made of him, and according to the exceeding great and precious promises, that are confirmed in him, and are experienced by ourselves to be faithful and true; and therefore we not only persist in boldly preaching the gospel, through much tribulation; but likewise openly declare our faith and hope in him, for deliverance out of all our troubles and for the inheritance of eternal life at the end of them to his glory and the encouragement of all that do or shall believe in him:

14 Being

#### N O T E.

\* The same spirit of faith is referred, by some, to the same with the Old Testament Saints, and by others, to the same with that of true believers among the Corinthians. I have included both senses, the better to comport with what immediately follows, *I believed, and therefore have I spoken*, in the Psalmist, and with what the apostle adds at the close of the next verse, and shall present us with

you; and have also hinted Mr Peirce's thought, who, by the same spirit of faith, understands the same spirit of faith, which Jesus himself had, who is spoken of in the preceding and following verses, and who this learned writer thinks is the person, that spoke in the words quoted from *Psal. cxvi.* See his second dissertation, at the end of the epistle to the Hebrews.

14 Knowing, that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

14 Being well assured, that the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; (Heb. xiii. 20.) and who did this, in testimony, that divine justice was fully satisfied by his death, will also, at the consummation of all things, quicken our mortal bodies, and raise them up to a blessed immortality, for the sake of Jesus, our great head and Redeemer, through the merit of his blood and by the energy of his spirit; and will approve of us, together with you that believe, as accepted in the beloved and will present both faithful ministers, and all his members, faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. (Jude ver. 24.)

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, thro' the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.

15 For all the preaching, labours, and sufferings of Christ's servants, and indeed all things relating to the gospel dispensation, which shall issue in the glory of the heavenly world, are intended, ordered and made effectual, with a special regard to you that belong to God, for your spiritual edification and eternal salvation, to the end that the riches of divine grace, which is so exceedingly abounding through our Lord Jesus Christ, might turn to an overflowing revenue of glory to the God and Father of mercies, by means of the grateful acknowledgements, thanksgivings and praises of vast multitudes, even of all that are, or shall be, converted and saved by our ministrations; and the more there are of them, the higher will his glorious name be exalted.

16 For which cause we faint not but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

16 In realizing views and considerations of these happy fruits and effects of our ministry to others, and to our own souls, we, as I said (ver. 1.) are not discouraged by the many difficulties and dangers, that attend our fulfilling it; but though, through numberless fatigues and hardships, our mortal bodies and all our outward enjoyments gradually decline and waste away, and must soon come to an end; yet our immortal and regenerate souls (See the note on Rom. vii. 22.) are daily revived, strengthened and improved in all grace, comfort, and holiness, by fresh supplies of the spirit and manifestations of God's love; and are sensibly growing more and more in desire and meetness, for the perfection of a better world.

17 For our light affliction, which

17 For though, in the judgment of flesh and sense our multiplied tribulations may seem exceeding burdensome, and tedious to be borne; yet in the account of faith, and compared with the vast importance, and endless duration of the happiness we hope for, the heaviest

which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory

and longest of them are but light and momentary, inconsiderable in themselves, and soon over and gone, like things that pass away in an instant: And we cheerfully bear up under them; because, not by any virtue or merit in them, but by the special sanctifying influence of the holy Spirit, they turn to such noble improvements of a heavenly nature here, as proportionably form and fit us for, and shall surely issue in and give a peculiar relish to, and be graciously owned and honoured with superior degrees of <sup>\*</sup>, an unutterable state of all that is completely happy and glorious hereafter; a state which in opposition to *light afflictions* †, is an accumulation of the most sublime dignities and ravishing delights, that can be enjoyed, and sustained by human nature in it's utmost exaltation; and which in opposition to a *moment* of disagreeables, is an incessant everlasting confluence of joy and grandeur, equal to our utmost wishes, and capacities of receiving, and infinitely transcending all that can be represented, by the strongest and most vigorous metaphors taken from crowns and kingdoms, and the most dazzling glories of this world; so that all the sufferings of the present transitory life, are not worth once mentioning, when compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. (*Rom. viii. 18.*)

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which

18 Experience and faith prove all this ‡, while, like archers intently looking at their mark in shooting, (*σκοπεῖν*) we attend, not to earthly things, that are visible to an eye of sense, nor direct our aim at them, as though we rated our happiness by them; but are chiefly mindful of, influenced by, and carefully aiming at, those heavenly things, as our grand mark that cannot be perceived by a corporal eye, and yet are realiz'd and appropriated by faith, and are of the highest importance to us; For all sensitive objects, whether they be comfortable or afflictive, are of exceeding short and uncertain continuance, like shadows that flee away; but the invisible objects of faith and hope, which are all substantial and satisfying, are, like the eternal and unchangeable

#### N O T E S.

\* This *working for us a far more exceeding weight of glory*, intimates, that they who suffer as well as do, much for Christ in this world, shall, in the order of God's gracious dispensations, be made partakers of higher degrees of glory, than others in the next.

† The beauty, sublimity, and grandeur of these expressions, as descriptive of heavenly glory, (*Καὶ ὑπερβολὴν τῆς υπερβολῆς, αἰωνίον βζον δόξης*) and the opposition in which they are set to temporal afflictions, surpass

all imagination, and are incapable of being preserved, answerable to their dignity, in any translation or paraphrase, which, after all, sink infinitely below the astonishing original, and the aggrandizing thoughts suggested by it. What a fullness of sentiment, language, and transport is here! See *Blackwall's sacred classics*, vol. I. p. 330, &c.

‡ While we *look*, &c. may refer to the influence of their faith, with regard to all the particulars mentioned in the two preceding verses.



which are not seen  
are eternal.

changeable God himself, perpetually enduring through and beyond millions of millions of ages, yea, beyond all computation by thought, or numbers, without interruption, abatement, or end.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How great is their mercy, who are put into the gospel ministry, qualified for it, and supported and made faithful in it; and who, notwithstanding all opposition and reproach, hold on their way without fainting, and seek to be approved of God, and recommended to the consciences of their hearers, by an open publication of the truth, without sinister views, and without craft or guile! They don't preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord in all his characters, and take pleasure in serving the spiritual and eternal interests of the church for his sake. And, O how excellent is the evangelical treasure, which is put into such weak, despicable and mortal creatures, for the enriching of others, as well as of their own souls, that all the good found in them, and done by them, may the better appear to be intirely of God, and not at all of themselves! If any that enjoy a clear ministration of the gospel, continue to be ignorant of it's important truths, and unimpressed by them; it is because they are still wandering in the lost state of nature, under the power of the Prince of darkness, whose great business and design is to keep them stupid and blind, lest he should lose his vassals, through the illumination of their minds by the glorious gospel of Christ, who is both the essential and representative image of God the Father: But O with what convincing evidence, power, and advantage, doth this blessed gospel appear, when God by his spirit unveils it's glory, and sheds it's illustrious, amiable, and penetrating light, in the hearts of his servants and people! They may indeed be in deep distress, through fears within, and fightings without, but they shall not be utterly overwhelmed, or forsaken of their God: They may resemble their great Lord and Master in sufferings for his sake; but, by their holy fellowship with him in his death, they shall be supported under them, and carried through them; and the powerful life of Christ, shall be manifested in their preservation, till at length, like their exalted head and Saviour they shall be raised up, in high favour and acceptance with God, to a blessed immortality, together with the whole multitude of believers, that glory may redound to his name, through their united praises. They that are fully persuaded of these things by the faith of the operation of his Spirit, which, for substance, is the same in ministers and private Christians, and in Old and New Testament-Saints, will neither be ashamed to speak of them, nor faint under any difficulties or discouragements that surround themselves. O how invaluable are the spiritual improvements, and final issues of all our present tribulations, when as the outward man perishes, the inward man is daily renewed, and grace is ripening apace for glory! and how light and momentary are all the afflictions of this life compared with that superabounding and eternal weight of glory, which lies beyond them; and for the highest enjoyment of which, God, in the riches of his free favour and love through Jesus Christ, prepares us, by means of what we endure in the body! Experience will help our faith, with respect to these real and vast importances, whilst our governing views and regards are, not to the transitory things of this visible world; but to the infinite, though unseen felicities of the heavenly state, which abide the same, without diminution or alloy, for ever.

### C H A P. V.

*The apostle, in further setting forth the grounds of his, and his brethren's not fainting under their troubles, insists on their assured hope, and earnest desire of heavenly glory, 1,—8. Shews how they were excited thereby to diligence in their work, 9,—11. Gives the reasons of his*

seeming to commend himself, and of his being so much transported with zeal for the Corinthians, who were mostly Gentile converts, on account of which the Jewish zealots censured him, as though he were besides himself, 12,—16. And shews the necessity of regeneration, and of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, the ministry of which was committed to him and his brethren, 17,—21.

## TEXT.

For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

## PARAPHRASE.

WE, as has been said but now, having eternal glory in view, don't flag in our work, nor faint under our manifold afflictions: For we are not only persuaded upon the testimony of God in his word, that there is a rest provided for his people; but by the witness of his spirit with our spirits, as his children we are likewise fully assured, that we ourselves have a personal interest in it; and that when ever these frail bodies, in which our souls now dwell, as in their house and home (*ver. 6.*) during our state of pilgrimage and warfare upon earth; and which were originally formed out of it, and are like mean and moveable tents, that are erected but for a little while, and must quickly be taken to pieces, and pulled down: As soon, I say, as this mortal frame shall be dissolved, whether by a natural or violent death, we make no doubt but that *our spirits*, which will then return to God, who gave them, (*Eccles. xii. 7.*) shall be immediately possessed of a much more glorious habitation; which we already have in title, and sure reversion, by the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ, and which he has graciously prepared for us; even a secure, firm, and delightful mansion for our souls, in the immediate presence of Christ; (*ver. 8.*) \* a mansion not of human, temporary fabrick, like tents and tabernacles that are made by the hands of men, but built, like a celestial palace, on immoveable foundations by the immediate power of God himself, (*Heb. xi. 10.*) for our eternal

## NOTE.

\* The apostle was so far from thinking that he, or his brethren in the ministry, any more than other Christians, should not die, that, on the contrary, he speaks of their being *absent from the body*, as well as others, (*ver. 8.*) and had expressed his confidence, (*chap. iv. 14.*) that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus, would raise them up also by Jesus, and present them with the believing Corinthians: and therefore, *If our earthly house were dissolved*, is not to be understood in a way of doubting, but of supposing what, sooner or later, would be, much in the same manner as this particle *If* was used by our Lord, when he said, *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, &c.* (*John xiv. 2.*) And the house not made with hands: *that is,*

the heavens, seems to signify the blessed transitions, to which the souls of believers shall go, to dwell with Christ, and with the spirits of the just made perfect, (*Heb. xii. 22, 23.*) in his Father's house, immediately after death: For the apostle speaks of a happiness in his presence, which would commence instantly upon their being *absent from the body*, and from which they were detained only by their being *at home in the body*, *ver. 6, 8.* And yet as the happiness of the soul in heaven, will be followed and completed by the resurrection of the body, he might also have that in his ultimate view; and therefore I have added it in the paraphrase on this, and several following verses.

eternal confidence in a manner suitable to his own excellent greatness and goodness, past all danger of remove, or decay, in the highest heaven: And we are satisfied that, at Christ's second appearing, this mortal body shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, by his Almighty power; and that then we shall be clothed again with our immortalized bodies, and so in our whole persons be everwith the Lord. (*Phil. iii. 21.* and *1 Thess. iv. 17.*)

2 For in this we are earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our mantle which is from heaven:

2 Our believing prospect of this blessedness has a powerful influence upon us, and is animated by what we feel in ourselves: For, while we sojourn in this tabernacle, (*ver. 4.*) we are oppressed with so many afflictions, and with such sad remainders of the body of sin, as make us sigh and mourn, with extreme anguish, under their burden; and excite our vehement desires after our heavenly home, where we shall be covered with light, holiness, and joy, as with a garment; and where, at the resurrection of the just, this mortal body shall put on immortality.

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

3 We, I say, are earnestly, though not impatiently, longing for this; since (*ver. 2.*) we are fully satisfied, that being thus invested with robes of glory, and repossessed of our immortalized bodies, we shall not be destitute of any happiness, nor exposed to any miseries, or defilements, as we now are, much less as the impenitent and unbelieving will be in the other world for ever.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

4 For we that now dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, (*Job iv. 19.*) have strong desires to be set at liberty from the distressing troubles, that cannot but be very trying to flesh and blood; and especially from indwelling corruption, which is our most grievous burden, as it is offensive and dishonourable to God, and interrupts and hinders us in his service, and in our communion with him: Not that we are so cool in our affection to the body itself, as to wish to be rid of it, merely for the sake of being so, or to part with it by dying rather than to carry it along with us to heaven; No, were it the will of God, we should be glad to be translated, as *Enoch* and *Elias* were, and as those believers, that shall be alive at the second coming of Christ, will be: (*1 Thess. iv. 17.*) But the grand point, to which the holy aspirations of our souls tend, is that, in God's own way and time, we may arrive at the bright and glorious regions above; and that all the natural and sinful infirmities, which attend us in this frail and mortal state, may be ingulphed, and as it were drowned and lost, in the transcendent, undefiled felicities of an immortal life, which the soul shall enter upon

on, as soon as ever it is separated from the body; and which shall be perfected in a vital reunion of both, at the resurrection.

3 Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit.

5 And, <sup>(24)</sup> for the further confirmation of our faith, God himself has not only revealed and promised all this future blessedness; but has formed our souls, by his renewing and sanctifying grace, into spiritual and holy dispositions, desires, and propensions heavenward, to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light: (*Col.* i. 12.) It is the work, the peculiar prerogative, and the glory of a God to do this \*; and none could be the author of it, but the only living and true God, who has likewise given us a pledge, token, and foretaste, and the beginnings of that glorious inheritance, (*Eph.* i. 14.) in the graces, consolations, witnessing, and abiding residence of his Holy Spirit, which he has freely given us, by way of earnest before-hand, as a part, to secure the possession of the whole, and to assure us of a certain arrival, in due season, to a complete enjoyment of it.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

6 In consideration therefore of these things, we are enabled, on all occasions, to face our trials, sufferings, and death itself, with undaunted courage: and are raised to an entire satisfaction in our own souls, and to an humble trust in the Lord, that we shall get through them all to the mansions of eternal glory; as knowing that while we dwell in mortal flesh, as the tabernacle of our present abode, we are only, like persons in a state of pilgrimage and warfare, in a strange country, at a great distance from the immediate presence of the Lord, our dear Redeemer, and from our Father's house.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

7 For the life we now live in the flesh, and according to which we regulate all our behaviour, is by the faith of the Son of God, and by that faith which overcomes the world, and is the evidence of things not seen and so it is a life of joyful expectation and hope, amidst all our afflictions; but not of beatifick vision and full fruition, as it soon will be.

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

8 In this situation, we bear up, with life and vigour under all our present hardships and dangers, and with unshaken hopes of their happy issues; and not only so, but are desirous, and should be much pleased, (*ευδοκούμεν*) were it the will of God, to depart from the body; and leaving all our natural and moral imperfections behind us, to go into the immediate presence of Christ, that we may be with him, where he is, to behold his glory, and

#### N O T E.

† Mr *Howe* observes, that God here is not the subject but the predicate, q. d. This is the work of a deity; none but God could

be the author of such desires. *Blessedness of the righteous*, p. 462.

and may be intirely transformed into his likeness, by seeing him as he is.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent we may be accepted of him.

9 Having therefore this satisfying hope, and earnest desire, we studiously endeavour, by divine grace, and are inspired with a holy ambition, that, whether we continue to live in the body, or whether our souls depart from it by death, all our labours, services and sufferings \*, as well as our persons, may find gracious acceptance with the Lord Jesus, through the merit of his own blood and righteousness; and that he, as the great judge of all, may say to each of us, at last, *well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* (Matth. xxv. 21.)

10 For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: that every one may receive in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

10 For the time is coming apace, when all of us ministers and people, *Jews and Gentiles*, with every individual of mankind, must, whether we will or not, make our solemn personal appearance, and be laid open to the view of our own consciences, men and angels, and *that* without the least disguise, before the strict tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the great judge of the whole world, will critically examine into, and finally decide all causes; that every one, be he saint or sinner, may then receive in †, and through the body in it's state of reunion with the soul, the gracious reward, or the just punishment, of his own ways and works, which he went into, and acted by the body together with all the iniquities he committed, in thought as well as deed, while he was here in the body according to the nature and kind, and proportionable to the degree of his habitual and governing thoughts, words and actions, in which he lived and died, whether they were good and holy, or unprofitable and wicked.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we

11 Being therefore thoroughly convinced from the word of God, from the reasons of things, and from the sense we ourselves have had of the evil of sin, and of the tremendous wrath due to it, that this will be an inexpressibly dreadful day to every hypocrite and unbeliever, we, from a compassionate concern for the sinful

#### N O T E.

\* *He labour that we may be accepted*, seems most directly to be meant of the acceptance of their services, together with their persons: For the apostle had all along supposed them to be already thoroughly satisfied about their personal acceptance with God to eternal life; and the next verse he speaks of appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body.

† The words (*κατὰ τὸ σώμα*) here rendered *the things done in his body*, signify things by or through the body, neither the word, *done*,

nor *his*, being in the Greek; and so it may relate to the rewards and punishments, that shall be fully received by the body, as well as soul, and by the soul through the body, at the day of judgment, and includes the retribution, which shall then be made, according to the good and bad, that has been done in this world, by the body, as the instrument of them, as well as according to the spiritual virtues and graces on one hand, and mental sins and spiritual wickedness on the other, which the body has no agency in.

we persuade men but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

if sons of men, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, faithfully endeavour, by all awaking and alluring considerations that are proper, and through divine influence, may be effectual, to convince them as rational creatures, of the certainty of a future judgment; of their own guilt and danger; and of the necessity of faith in Christ and of turning from their iniquities to God through him; (*ver.* 17.) and we earnestly beseech them to receive the message of peace and reconciliation which we, as Christ's ambassadors, bring to them, (*ver.* 19, 20.) that they may believe through grace, and live like those that must be judged by him, as ever they would have boldness before him at his coming: And (3.) whether they will bear or forbear; and go on to discredit us, or not; we can humbly appeal to God, who knows our hearts that we are sincere herein; and I cannot but persuade myself, that we have a testimony of our being so, in many of your own consciences from what ye have known of our preaching, sufferings, and behaviour, and from the happy effects of our ministry upon you.

11 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have some what to answer them which glory in appearance and not in heart.

12 For we have no need of saying any thing again to recommend ourselves, and our labours to your good opinion, as if ye were not witnesses of our faithfulness nor is it our aim, as some reproach us, to set off our own character, in an undue manner, to ingratiate ourselves with you: (See the paraphrase and note on *chap.* iii. 1.) But we only suggest a proper occasion for you to rejoice and glory in the favour, which God has shewn to us, and to you by us, that ye may be furnished with sufficient arguments to confute the calumnies, and silence the vain boastings of those *Judaizing* teachers, who make a fair show in the flesh, and would run us down by exalting themselves; and yet must know, in their own consciences, that they have no just ground of glorying, in themselves, or of insulting over us.

13 For whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God, or whether we

13 For whether, as they and their followers would insinuate, we are transported quite beyond ourselves, and talk like foolish and distracted men, not only in vindicating our own character, but especially in the zeal and fervour, with which we earnestly contend for an admission of believing *Gentiles*\*, equally with the *Jews*, to

#### N O T E.

\* It is generally allowed that a great part of the *Corinthian* church were *Gentiles*, and that the grand prejudices of the *Judaizing* zealots against the apostle Paul, was on account of his admitting even uncircumcised

*Gentile* believers into the gospel church, without distinction from the *Jews*; and all the verses that follow this, and are brought in as the reasons of what he here says of himself, seem in a special manner to speak of

we be sober, it is  
for your cause.

to all the privileges of the gospel-church; it is merely from a conscience toward God, and with a sincere design of advancing his glory, in supporting the credit of the gospel, and displaying the riches of his grace, as now extended to the *Gentiles*; and God knows that we are not besides ourselves: Or whether, as others more justly think, we herein act the part of rational and good men, who speak the words of truth and soberness, and *that* sometimes in the more calm and sedate way, it is with the like concern for his glory, in your edification and salvation, who are the *Gentile* part of the church.

14 For the love  
of Christ con-  
straineth us, be-  
cause we thus  
judge, that if one  
died for all, then  
were all dead:

14 For a sense of the exceeding greatness, freeness, and endearments of Christ's dying love, which kindles a sacred flame of love in our souls to him again, has a sweet and powerful influence to excite, incline, and oblige us, as to do all we can in imitation of and obedience to him, for the glory of God, and the good of the church; so particularly to preach the gospel to *Gentile* sinners, as well as to the *Jews*, for promoting these ends: And this we do under a sort of holy and delightful constraint; because we reason and conclude after this manner, that if according to gospel revelation, the one only Saviour died in the room and stead of all sorts of sinners †, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; this plainly supposes, that they were all equally and alike, by nature, children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins, (*Eph. ii. 1, 3.*) and under a law sentence of condemnation and death; so that, in this respect, one has

no

#### N O T E S.

the grace of God toward them: And therefore I understand this verse (with Mr Pyle) to relate to the apostle's preaching and behaviour with respect to them, rather than to his commendation of himself, as it is most commonly interpreted. In this view his whole argument here, and in what follows, stands in the fairest connection; and if we consider him, as having also an eye upon what he had said in commending himself, and his ministering brethren, or, as some suppose, upon his speaking of his *astuties* and *visions*, they may still be taken in, subservient to this principal view.

† The term *all* is often used, not universally, for every individual, but distributively, for all sorts, or for some of every sort, as when it is said, *One believes that he may eat all things*, (*Rom. xiv. 2.*) and the Pharisees tithed all herbs (*καὶ κικανόν*) which is justly translated *all manner of herbs*, (*Luke xi. 42.*) and Hazael's present to *Elisha* is said in the Hebrew to be every good thing, (*2 Kings viii. 12.*) but is truly rendered, *Of every good thing of Damascus*, *2 Kings viii. 10.* And as the design of the apostle, in what he here says,

is to vindicate his zeal for the *Gentiles* against the cavils of his chief opposers among the *Jews*; it seems every way natural to understand him as speaking of all, in the distributive, rather than in the universal sense. And in other places the application, as well as merit of Christ's death, is spoken of in terms as universal as this; but cannot possibly be understood in an absolutely unlimited sense; as in *Luke iii. 6. All flesh shall see the salvation of God*, *John iii. 17. God sent his Son, that the world through him might be saved*; and *vi. 33. The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, and *xii. 32. I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me*; and *Acts ii. 17. I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh*. See also the notes on *John i. 7, 29.* But some understand, *then were all dead*, to mean, agreeable to the preceding and following context, then were all obliged to die to sin, or to die to themselves, that they might live to Christ; and so make it a parallel place to *Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9.* Vid. *hij.* in loc.

no better claim to gospel privileges and blessings, than another.

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.

15 And we further argue and consider, that our blessed Lord died, as the substitute of sinners of all nations, to this very end and purpose, that those of them, who, in virtue of his death, are made supernaturally alive, by his quickning spirit, and through faith in him, should from that time forward no longer pursue their own carnal, selfish, and secular interests, nor indulge their own lusts and passions, nor make their own honour, ease, and pleasure, the chief end of their living in this world; but should devote their redeemed and recovered lives unto the service, interest, and glory of their great Lord and Saviour, who died in their law-place, to take away their sins by the sacrifice of himself; and rose again, as a public person, for their justification.

16 Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

16 For this reason therefore we, the ministers of the gospel of reconciliation, think ourselves bound to preach it to all nations, without regarding any man, as better or worse, on account of his pedigree and external privileges, or of his being circumcised in the flesh, or not. Nay, though those of us \*, who were the disciples of Jesus, in the days of his flesh, then considered and valued him, principally under the notion of a temporal Messiah (*Luke ix. 46. and Acts i. 6.*) of Jewish extract, who came to enrich and aggrandize their nation, and to establish their civil and religious privileges, and was circumcised in the flesh to put an honour upon that ordinance among them; yet now, under the clearer revelation of the gospel, in consequence of his death and resurrection, ascension to heaven, and effusion of his spirit, we no longer, like the false apostles and their adherents, consider and esteem him under any such carnal view; but have more spiritual and exalted regards to him, and more heavenly and holy conceptions of the design of all, that he has done and suffered, as laying a solid foundation for advancing the divine glory and true religion and godliness, among *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things

17 The main thing therefore in the Christian religion is, that if any man, of what country soever, be in Christ, not merely by external profession, but by internal, vital union to him, and personal interest in him, through faith in his blood; though such an one doth not cease to be a man of the same essential powers and faculties

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle being a stranger to our Lord, during his abode upon earth, could not speak of himself as having known Christ after the flesh; but others of his fellow-

apostles so knew him, in the sense here intended; and therefore we must suppose, that he included, or rather principally meant them.



things are past away, behold, all things are become new.

faculties, which he had before; yet, in a moral and spiritual sense, there is such a thorow change in his understanding, will and affections, and manner of life, by the renewing influence, which he is under from Christ, his head, as amounts to a new creation after his own image; (*Eph. ii. 10.*) insomuch that his old principles, inclinations, motives, governing ends, and course of conversation, which were all corrupt, worldly, and carnal before, are laid aside, and done with, as no longer chosen by him, or maintaining their dominion over him: And, instead of them, behold the wonderful and happy alteration! a new divine light is diffused in his mind; a new spiritual byass is set upon his heart; and a new holy turn is given to his life; so that his prevailing sense of things, relating to himself, God and Christ, earth and heaven; his rule and measures of conduct; and his settled principles, views, and ways of acting, are all intirely new, and directly contrary to what they were before.

18 And all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath, given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

18 And as God is the creator of this world, and every good and perfect gift is from above; (*Jam. i. 17.*) so all the great and important things, relating to the new creation; and the whole scheme of the gospel, in all its extent and glory, relating to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, are intirely of him, as their author, who *of his own will begets us with the word of truth*, (*Jam. i. 18.*) and who has found out an amazing expedient, and made it effectual, for repairing the breach, which sin had caused, and restoring friendship between him and us that believe, by the atoning death and sufferings of Jesus Christ: God also, in the greatness of his condescension and grace, has honoured and entrusted us, his apostles and ministers, with a dispensation of the gospel, which holds forth this way of reconciliation between his offended majesty and offending sinners.

19 To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

19 The tenor of which ministry is, that the blessed God, according to the eternal counsels of his adorable wisdom and grace, has been *first* in this grand affair of reconciling sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, to himself, (see the note on *John iii. 16.*) by the mediation and propitiatory sacrifice of his incarnate Son, which he himself appointed, provided, and accepted, for the satisfaction of his law and justice, and making peace, that he might not charge any of their iniquities, nor inflict their deserved punishment, upon those of them, who by faith receive the atonement; and, as I said, (*ver. 18.*) he has appointed, commissioned, and sent us to preach this glorious gospel of reconciliation and peace, in all the world, even to every rational creature, of what nation

nation forever, as we have opportunity for it. (*Mark xvi. 15.*)

10 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us

us

20 We are therefore <sup>(v)</sup> ambassadors of peace \*, whom Christ has sent to transact for him, in his name and stead, with men, (*ver. 11.*) that are in a dangerous state of variance with the great God, and to preach the gospel of reconciliation to a lost world, (*ver. 19.*) consisting of *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*: And as ambassadors are public ministers, that personate the sovereign princes and states, from which they are sent, and that negotiate the affairs of their principals; so in the discharge of our divine commission, not to fallen angels, but to fallen men \*, to sinners of this lower world, we speak from God, as if he himself were visibly present, to intreat them with all endearing condescension and kindness, and to exhort them (*παρακαλῶντες*) with all authority, to attend unto, regard, and accept of the gracious proposals, which he makes to them, by means of our ministry: We use all proper arguments, in the name of Christ

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle sometimes speaks of himself and his brethren in the ministry, as Servants, Watchmen, Husbandmen, Labourers, and the like, to avoid all appearance of ostentation, and to intimate that they thought no employment in Christ's service, too mean or laborious for them to go into, for the honour and interest of their great Lord and Master, and for the good of immortal souls: But at other times, when their characters were insulted, run down and vilified, as among some of the Corinthians, he magnified their office, to support their esteem in the churches, and vindicate them against the unjust reproaches, and contemptuous treatment of their enemies. With this view he spoke of them as Stewards, 1 Cor. iv. 1. which is one of the highest offices in a household, and here he speaks of them as ambassadors, which is one of the most honourable offices in a kingdom: And though none are so immediately Ambassadors now, as the apostles were, who received their commission personally from Christ himself; yet gospel ministers are immediately ambassadors still, as they are put into their office by his authority, according to the rules of his word; and come on his message to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in his name, and ministerially to carry on a treaty of peace through him.

† It is to be observed, that in the two middle clauses of this verse, the pronoun *you* is not in the Greek, nor is it found for several verses in the preceding context; and as the apostle had said, *ver. 11. Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men*, we may naturally suppose, that he refers to *men*, whom, as he there said, they persuaded, and so we may think the words, *as though God*

up the original thus, *As though God did beseech men by us, we pray them, in Christ's stead, saying, Be ye reconciled to God*: Or else, as the apostle had in the verse, immediately before this, spoke of God's reconciling the world, inclusive of *Gentiles*, to himself, the words wanting in the Greek may very properly and easily be supplied thus, *As though God did beseech the world by us, we pray them, in Christ's stead, saying, Be ye reconciled to God*; and to it seems to me, that the apostle was not here so directly addressing himself to the Corinthians, according to their then present character, who were supposed to be already actually reconciled to God, as giving them an account of the general tenor of his ministry according to what he preached to them, when he first came among them, as he likewise did to all others, in their state of unregeneracy, where-ever he came, saying to them, *Be ye reconciled to God*. However, were we to suppose that he meant any of the Corinthians, when he said, *Be ye reconciled to God*; we may consider it as relating, not to the better part of the church, who were already brought into a state of reconciliation and friendship with God through Christ, but to the worst part of them, who had too much fondness for the false apostles, and had discovered too great dissimulation to the pure doctrine of salvation alone by Jesus Christ: For he immediately after said to these, (*chap. vi. 1.*) *We beseech you, that ye receive not the grace of God*, that is, the doctrine of his grace, *in vain*, (see the note there.) And he told them, that he was zealous over them with godly jealousy, lest their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel.

us : we pray you  
in Christs stead,  
be ye reconciled  
to God.

Christ, and for his sake, as personating him, and pleading for him, to persuade the sinful sons of men ; and we affectionately desire them, as they would value their own souls, to embrace him, as the only Saviour now, who will be their judge at the last day : (ver. 10, 11) and the sum of our address to them, in hope that the Lord will make it effectual, is this, Since satisfaction is already made to the justice of God by the death of his Son, that he may pardon and shew favour to all sorts of sinners through faith in him ; let these gracious encouragements engage you to throw down your arms of rebellion, to submit to mercy, and to God's own way of salvation by a Redeemer, as also to yield yourselves up, by divine assistance, intirely and without reserve to God, that peace and friendship on both sides may be established between him and you.

21 For he hath  
made him to be sin  
for us, who knew  
no

21 For God the Father, in justice to himself, and to his law and government, and in the riches of his love and grace to us, whether we be *Jewish* or *Gentile* believers, has laid our iniquities in such a manner upon his own Son, that though he was perfectly, holy and unspottedly pure in himself, as having no sin in his temper or practice, nor the least consciousness of guilt on any such account, and though no iniquity of others was infused into him ; yet our sins were judiciously imputed to him, by way of law charge, and in a sacrificial sense, as our substitute, who had freely undertaken to answer for them ; and thereupon he bore the legal punishment due to them, by being made a sacrifice for sin, when *through the eternal spirit he offered himself without spot to God* ; (Heb. ix. 14.) to the end that (viz) what he voluntarily suffered, in our room and stead, might be imputed for justification to us through faith in him ; and that we, by virtue of our union with him, might be constituted

#### N O T E.

+ The word (*αμαρτια*) Sin, was commonly used in the *Septuagint* to signify a *sin-offering*, in which the guilt of the offender was ceremonially transferred to the sacrifice ; in token whereof, he laid his hand upon its head, and it was killed before the Lord to make an atonement, Lev. iv. 12,—16. with a typical reference to the great atoning sacrifice of Christ : and unless the guilt of our iniquities, or the law obligation to punishment for them, had been judicially charged upon him, it seems to me that he could not, by any rule of justice, have bore their punishment : For, in the order of justice, our sins must first be supposed to be placed to his account to answer for them, before he could undergo the proper punishment due to

them, since divine justice can no more punish the intirely, and in all respects, guiltless, than clear the guilty. Hence the scripture so often speaks of Christ, as *made under the law*, as *redeeming from the curse of the law*, (which contains all the punishment due to sin) by his *being made a curse for us*, and as *bearing our sins*, and *suffering for sins*, the just for the unjust, and the like. And as Christ was made sin, not by infusion or infection, but by *imputation*, that he might bear the punishment due to it : so we are *made the righteousness of God in him*, for justification to eternal life, not by an inherent righteousness, but by the *imputation* of his righteousness to us, that being placed to our account, as our sins were to his.

no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

constituted righteous in the sight of God, in a way correspondent to that, in which Christ was made sin; even by the imputation of his righteousness, which God himself has contrived and provided, approves of, accepts, and makes over to us for that purpose; and which he, who is God in our nature, worked out, and brought in for us, by his obedience and sufferings unto death; but which, nevertheless, is not transferred away from him to us, as our sins were from us to him; but which everlastingly remains in him, as in its original subject, to whom alone belongs all the glory of having been the author of it; and which is imputed to us, to free us from condemnation, and entitle us to life, only as we are found in him. (*Rom. viii. 1. and Phil. iii. 9.*)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a blessed assurance are some believers favoured with, who know that, whenever death pulls down this mortal frame, they have a heavenly mansion of God's own providing, and that their souls shall be no sooner absent from the body, than present with the Lord, to abide with him in his father's house for ever how strong are their breathings and pantings after that magnificent and delightful world! Not that they want to be rid of the body, or had rather go to heaven without, than with it; but they look and long for an admission into Christ's immediate presence, that this mortal state, with all its imperfections, may be swallowed up in a glorious and immortal life. For this God has formed them by his grace: of this he has given them a certain earnest and assuring pledge by his spirit; and in realizing views of this, they now walk by faith, till they shall arrive at the beatific vision. But O what an awful day will that be, when the whole world must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and every one shall receive gracious rewards, or righteous punishments, in a proper correspondence to the nature and degree of what they have done in the present life, whether it be good or bad! How conscientious and careful then should we be, that, living and dying, all our services, together with our persons, may be accepted of God in the Son of his love, and that we may have boldness before him at his coming! We should now no longer think of Christ, as the saviour of the *Jews* only, but of the *Gentiles* also; nor conceive of the blessings of his kingdom, as temporal and carnal, but as spiritual and heavenly; and should take heed of resting in external privileges and professions, since nothing short of vital union with him will be of any saving advantage to us; and if any man be thus in him, he is a new creature, in a spiritual and moral sense, with respect to which old things are passed away, and all things become new. Who, that knows the necessity of regeneration, and the terrors that will seize the unbelieving and ungodly in the day of judgment? And who, that has felt the sweet and powerful constraints of Christ's dying love to all sorts of sinners, and has hopes of heaven for his own soul, would not count himself obliged to live no longer to himself, but to him that died for his sins, and rose again for his justification; or would not, with humble and single aims at the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls, be desirous to use all ways and means, which, under the influence of divine grace, may be effectual to persuade men, as rational creatures, to consider their danger, and the hope there is in Christ for them, and to fall in with the method of reconciliation by him, which God himself has contrived? And blessed be his name, that he has set it on foot, and committed the ministry of it to his servants, whom he has sent, as ambassadors of peace, to promote and enforce it, with all earnestness and endearments, in the name of Christ, as though the great and offended God himself so far condescended, as by them to beseech the most contemptible and unworthy rebels to be reconciled to him. And how great is the sinners encouragement

agement to come in to God through a Redeemer; since he exhibits himself in the gospel, as reconciled by the atoning sacrifice of his Son, between whom and every true believer, there is such a law-change of persons, as has transferred their guilt and punishment to him, that, instead of their trespasses being imputed to them for condemnation, his righteousness might be imputed for justification to eternal life!

## C H A P. VI.

*The apostle shews the Corinthians how he, with others of his brethren, approved themselves to be faithful ministers of Christ, by their exhorting them to entertain the gospel of reconciliation with due regard, 1, 2. By their unblameable life, and behaviour under sufferings for Christ, 3,—10. By their affection for them, which he hoped would be answered with the like towards themselves, 11,—13. And by his own, together with his brethren's earnest concern, that they might have no fellowship with unbelievers and idolaters, 14,—18.*

## TEXT.

WE then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain :

## PARAPHRASE.

BEING therefore ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by us; (*Chap. v. 20.*) and so being joint-labourers one with another in the ministry of reconciliation \*, and instrumentally under-labourers to him, and in our order together with him, for his glory and the good of souls; we not only insist on this great article of our ministry, among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, wherever we come; but lest any of you should not be in heart, what ye are in outward profession, we, in godly jealousy over you, (*chap. xi. 2.*) tenderly intreat, (*παρακάλειν*) and earnestly exhort you also †, to take heed that ye do not lightly esteem the gospel of reconciliation, and receive it in notion only, and so render it unfruitful in yourselves, and ineffectual to answer the beneficial design of a doctrine, which may be called *the grace of God*, (*Tit. ii. 11.*) and *the word of his grace*, (*Acts xiv. 3.*) as it is the effect of his free favour; displays its glorious scheme; and is his appointed means of conveying its rich blessings, with all the gifts and graces of the spirit, to the saving of the soul.

2 For in a prophecy of Christ, and of what we now preach, as taking place upon *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, God the Father says to him in his office character, (*Isa. xlix. 8.*)

## N O T E S.

\* *With him*, not being in the *Greek*, we may consider the apostle, as intimating, that he and his brethren in the ministry were joint labourers, *one with another*, as well as labourers together with God, in their work.

† We beseech you also, seems plainly to

suggest, that what the apostle had mentioned of this kind, *chap. v. 20.* was not directed immediately to the church at *Corinth*, as this is; but was rather an account of the general tenor of his ministry. See the note there.

and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time behold, now is the day of salvation:)

xlix. 8.) \* I have heard and answered all thy desires of assistance in thy labours and sufferings, and of success in their rewards, (*Isa.* xlix. 4,—6.) at a time, in which thou wast peculiarly accepted of, and grateful to me, (*καίπερ δεύου*) on account of thy performing the work which I gave thee to do; and, in consequence of this, I have heard thy intercessory pleas, that the fruit of thy redeeming death may be applied to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, by means of the gospel, which ought to be as acceptable to all that hear it, and will be so to them that believe, as the year of *Jubilee* was to those that were then delivered from their servitude, and restored to their inheritances: And I have been seasonably at hand to help and uphold thee, in the day of thy greatest trial and difficulty, (*Isa.* l. 7,—9.) wherein thou wroughtest out salvation for my people, and wert victorious, in thy suffering and dying conflicts, for reconciling the world to myself. (*chap.* v. 19.) Since therefore God has thus accepted his Son, in what he has done and suffered to reconcile sinners of all nations to himself, behold, with attention, wonder, and joy, that now, while ye are under the gospel ministry, is the highly acceptable time (*καιρος ιουστης δεύου*) for you to put in for a share in this reconciling love of God through Jesus Christ: Now is the time, in which he will graciously accept you in your coming to him by his Son, and which is worthy of all acceptation: Observe it, now is the day; and, considering the precariousness of your lives, this may be the only day, in which salvation from sin and wrath is to be found; in which God proposes it to your acceptance, by the gospel; and in which ye, by his grace, may hope to be made partakers of it, through faith in the reconciling death of the great Redeemer.

3 Giving no offence in any thing that the ministry be not blamed:

3 In fulfilling this our excellent ministry, we are enabled, by divine assistance, to behave so circumspectly, and so cautiously, toward *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as to give no just occasion of offence in any place, or by any means whatsoever, to those that seek all advantages against us; lest our sacred and important office itself should fall under reproach, to the dishonour of Christ and his gospel, and to the hindrance of its success in our preaching it.

4 But in all things approving ourselves

4 But in every circumstance, and wherever we come, we labour, with an humble dependence on help from

#### N O T E.

\* The words here quoted from *Isaiah* being so plain a prophecy of Christ, and of the calling of the *Gentiles*, I have considered the use that the apostle makes of them, in this direct view, rather than, as many have done, in a way of accommodation only

to gospel times; and this casts further light upon his foregoing discourse, as having a reference to the *Gentiles*, according to the sense given all along in the paraphrase, *scilicet* *chap.* v. 13. to this place.



holy Ghost, by  
love unfeigned,

7 By the word  
of truth, by the  
power of God, by  
the armour of  
righteousness on  
the right hand  
and on the left,

8 By honour  
and dishonour by  
evil report and  
good report : as  
de-

under all provocations, and to possess our own souls with quietness and peace, in humble hope of divine consolations to support us under present trials, and of heavenly blessedness to put an end to them ; by that affability and benignity of temper, which gives us a noble pleasure in doing good to all, and even to those that abuse us ; by the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in his gifts and graces, which furnish us for usefulness, and guide and animate us in the work of the Lord ; by our sincere and undisguised love to Christ, to the souls of men, and to the doctrines of divine revelation :

7 By the light and comfort of the gospel, which we believe to be infallibly true, as the word of that God who cannot lie, and which we preach according to its truth, without mixture of error ; by the almighty power of God, which strengthens us for, upholds us under, and is manifested in, all our sufferings and ministrations, and enables us to work miracles in confirmation of what we preach : It is through, or by means of these \*, and such like offensive, and defensive weapons of righteousness, (*δια των οπλων της δικαιοσυνης*) that we are strengthened with all might, according to God's glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness ; (Col. i. 11.) He has furnished us with this spiritual armour, that we might fight valiantly, acceptably, and successfully, in our holy warfare, as persons completely armed, and defended on every side, against all assaults, that can be made upon us from any quarter whatsoever ; whether it be by temptations of ease and prosperity on the right hand, or of fatigue and adversity on the left.

8 Being thus fortified against all our trials †, we pass with a steady temper of mind through different scenes, that open before us ; (*δια*) through the good esteem and honourable respect of some, without being puffed up or elated by them ; and through the contempt and shameful usage of others, without being depressed in spirit by them ; through all the hard speeches, and infamous slanders of our enemies, to sink our character, without being discouraged, or moved at them ; and through the commend-

#### N O T E S.

† The armour of righteousness appears to me to be rather a summing up, under this title, what the apostle had been speaking of in this and the foregoing verse, than any thing distinct from it : And if we compare those particulars with his account of the whole armour of God, in Eph. vi. 13. &c. we shall find a very great agreement between them. It is likewise observable, that all the preparations, which in this, and the foregoing verse

are rendered *by*, are here altered in the Greek from one, which signifies *in* or *by*, (*in*) to another, which signifies *by*, or *thru'* (*δια*).

† In this verse, as I take it, the apostle returns to the detail, especially of his own, inclusive of some of his brethren's unblameable and end unbecoming behaviour, in every circumstance of life, by means of those spiritual advantages, which he had recited in the two preceding verses.



deceivers, and yet  
true;

9 As unknown  
and yet well  
known; as dying  
and behold, we  
live; as chasten-  
ed, and not kil-  
led;

10 As sorrow-  
ful, yet alway re-  
joicing; as poor,  
yet making many  
rich; as having  
no

commendations and applauses of our friends to raise our reputation, without being proud of them, or valuing ourselves upon them: God, in his wise and holy providence, has permitted, that we should be looked upon, spoken of, and treated by many, as hypocritical impostors, that cheat and seduce the people; and yet we, as the true servants of Christ, are sincere and faithful in preaching the gospel, and in all that we say, and do.

9 We are represented by men of figure, and high pretenders to wisdom and learning, as mean, worthless, and obscure persons, of little or no account, and many are ignorant of our real character; and yet others have seen so much of the wisdom, power, and grace of God in our ministrations, conversation, and patience in sufferings, and have had so much experience of spiritual benefit by our means, that they well know us to be honoured of God, and persons of importance to themselves; and we are known and approved of, far and wide, among all the churches of the saints: We are in perpetual jeopardy from our enemies, like persons that seem to be every day in the jaws of death; and yet, behold how wonderfully God appears on our behalf! We are still in the land of the living, and are lively in our own souls: We are trained up, as under the severest discipline from the hands of men, which we likewise consider as the chastisements of the Lord; and yet we are neither brought down to the dust of death, by the extremity of our sufferings; nor do our reviving hopes and confidences fail.

10 We seem to be in a very melancholy and miserable condition, as to all outward appearance; and yet we are full of the joys of faith, and of a good conscience within, and are daily rejoicing in hope of the glory of God: We are indeed poor, as to the things of this world, having none of its affluence, or comfortable accommodations; and yet we are instruments, in Christ's hand, of making many rich toward God; rich in faith, and in good works, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, together with ourselves: Yea, we are so extremely necessitous, as to have none of the enjoyments of this life, that we can properly call our own, and we look with such an holy indifference upon them, as not to desire to have our portion in them; and yet we have all things in Christ, our head, who is possessed of them for our use: As to temporal good things, we hold all, that his providence deals out to us, with his blessing, and in a covenant way; and we have as much of them, as he sees best and fittest for us, and are as fully satisfied with

nothing, and yet  
possessing all  
things.

that, as if we had ever so great a fulness of them; and as to spiritual and eternal blessings, we have the most excellent and durable riches in Christ, some already in hand, and all the rest in present title, and sure reversion, as our inheritance in him which we, in a little time, shall actually enjoy with him, in all its extent and glory.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth  
is open unto you  
our heart is enlarged.

11 O my dear *Corinthian* friends, we open ourselves thus freely to you, that ye may be encouraged, by what ye hear of our behaviour, supports, and consolations, under all our sufferings for Christ; and that ye may be able to vindicate our character against those, that would traduce it: And our heart is so full of love and affection to you, and concern for your spiritual edification and eternal salvation, that we think nothing too much to say, or do, to promote them.

12 Ye are not  
straitened in us,  
but ye are strait-  
ened in your own  
bowels.

12 There is no want of kindness in our souls toward you, nor of endeavours to do all, that in us lies, to subserve your establishment and growth in light, faith, and love, comfort and holiness; nor is there any deficiency in the gracious doctrines, promises, and privileges of the gospel, to promote them, which we minister to you; but, alas! There is reason to fear, concerning some of you at least, that your own hearts are too much shut up, through the workings of unbelief, carnality, and coolness of affection, against us, and against the consolations, which are in Christ for you: which suit your circumstances; and which we would fain have you partakers of.

13 Now for a  
recompence in the  
same, (I speak as  
unto my children)  
be ye also enlarg-  
ed.

13 And (J<sup>r</sup>) in return for the great love we bear to you, and for our desire and labour after your spiritual welfare, let us have the pleasure I beseech you, as a father would his dear children of finding that your hearts are enlarged in the same reciprocal affection to us, and in a cheerful reception of the truths and blessings of the gospel according to the utmost benevolence, with which we dilate upon them, and recommend them to your acceptance.

14 Be ye not  
unequally yoked  
together with un-  
believers: for  
what

14 In order hereunto, I would earnestly exhort and charge you, as a father doth his children, (*ver.* 13.) and especially the *Gentile* converts, among you, (who are most in danger, and most need the caution) that ye by no means intermarry with any, that are strangers to the grace of God, and continue in heathenism and unbelief, which would be more disagreeable, incongruous, and disproportionate, than yoking an ox and an ass, to plow together, was under the law: (*Deut.* xxii. 10.) Nay, I would not, that ye should cultivate an unnece-  
fary

what fellowship  
both righteousness  
with unright-  
eousness? and  
what communion  
both light with  
darkness?

fary intimacy of society with them, which might corrupt your minds and manners; and above all, see to it, that ye never join with them in any of their idolatrous practices, which would be, in effect, to renounce communion with Christ himself, directly contrary to your own happiness, duty, and profession: For what intercourse or partnership (*κοινωνία*) can there be, in holy and delightful friendship, between one, that is renewed and sanctified by the spirit of God, and one, that is under the dominion of sin? and what religious society and communion (*κοινωνία*) can there be between an understanding Christian, who is made light in the Lord, and one, who knows not God, nor any thing of the gospel of Christ, but remains under the power, and in the kingdom of darkness? These are as contrary one to the other, in the sentiments and dispositions, as light is to darkness itself.

25 And what  
accord hath  
Christ with Belial  
or what part hath  
he that believeth  
with an infidel?

15 And what harmony, or mutual consent, (*συμφωνία*) can there be between those that belong to Christ, as members of his mystical body, and those that are the children of the devil, that arch-rebel against God, who for his lawless wickedness, may be emphatically stiled \* *Belial*? Or what desirable lot and portion (*μερς*) can one that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ have in common, with an unbeliever, (*ἄπιστος*) that disowns or practically rejects him?

18 And what  
agreement hath  
the temple of  
God with idols?  
for ye are the  
temple of the li-  
ving God; as  
God hath said  
I will dwell in  
them, and walk  
in them; and I  
will

16 And what a suitable accord (*συμμετέσθαι*) can there be, between the temple of the only true God, which he has consecrated for himself, and the temples of false Gods, whom the heathens adore, and are devoted to? *Dagon* and *the Ark* might stand together, as well as these; and yet thus wide is the difference and contrariety between you, and those that are without Christ, and strangers to the covenant of promises: For ye are the habitation of God, through the spirit; (*Eph. ii. 22.*) and so are, in a much nobler sense, a temple separated for the service, and honoured with the special presence of that God, who has life in himself, and is the fountain of natural, spiritual, and eternal life to others, than ever the stately edifice at *Jerusalem* was; as appears from what God himself has declared in ancient promises, which, though primarily given to the *Israelites*, may ultimately and eminently be applied to the New Testament church, and to every true believer in it, saying (*Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.* and *Ezek xxxvii. 27.*) I will taber-  
nacle

# N O T E.

\* *Belial* is a compound word, which according to one etymology, (*בליעל*) signifies without profit, and according to another (*בלי יועל*) without yoke, that is, says the learned

*Answorth* on Deut. xiii. 23. lawless, rebellions and wicked: and he speaks of this name, as given to *Satan* in the passage we are upon.

will be their God  
and they shall be  
my people.

nacle with them, and fix my abode in, and among them, by way of special relation and gracious influence; and will commune with them, like a friend that keeps them company, and walks with them, to hear and answer their petitions, and to manifest myself in distinguishing tokens of love and favour to them; and I will be their God in an everlasting covenant, to make over myself and all my perfections to them for their portion; to form them for myself; to own them for my people, and delight in them as such; and to perform all things for them; and they hereupon shall be my covenant-people and peculiar property, to surrender themselves up to me; to own me for their God, and themselves for my people; to serve and delight in me; and to shew forth my praise.

17 Wherefore  
came out from a-  
mong them, and  
be ye separate,  
saith the Lord,  
and touch not the  
unclean thing;  
and I will receive  
you,

17 As therefore peculiar privileges of this sort obliged God's ancient people, the *Jews*, to abstain from intermarriages, and unnecessary familiarity with the heathens, and especially from symbolizing with them in their superstitious and idolatrous rites, and from defiling themselves with any thing that was unclean; and as ye, who are still more abundantly favoured with these high and glorious blessings, are under stronger obligations to act in a correspondence to them; so ye may think ye hear God saying to you, in language like that, which he formerly used to persons of a sacred character, (*Isa. lii. 11.*) have no fellowship with unbelievers and idolaters, beyond what the civil duties of life call you to; (*1 Cor. v. 9, 10.*) renounce all their sinful customs and practices, together with every thing that would endanger your compliance with them; and keep at the remotest distance from them, that ye may adhere intirely to me, as the only object of your faith and love, worship and obedience; and do not meddle, in the least degree, with any of their abominations, which are so defiling to conscience, and loathsome in my sight: And, for your encouragement hereupon, be assured that whatever ye may suffer in your names, and outward estate, on this account, I will take you into my favour and protection, and into the most delightful and advantageous communion with myself here; and will receive you to my kingdom and glory hereafter.

18 And I will not only be, but manifest myself, in the most gracious and endearing manner, to be your heavenly father; and will be a better relation to you, than any that ye can have, or lose upon earth; and ye shall be my children, a family of beloved sons and daughters to me; and shall accordingly be dealt with,

18 And will  
be a father unto  
you and ye shall  
be my sons and  
daugh-

daughters faithful the Lord almighty.

owned and blessed, as such here and for ever, says the Lord Jehovah \*, (*Jer.* xxxi. 1, 9, and 2 *Sam.* vii. 14.) who is faithful to his promises and is infinitely able to make them good.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What an honour and encouragement is it to the faithful servants of Christ, that God and they, in a proper order are embarked and employed in the same glorious cause, which is founded on Christ's acceptance with the Father, that sinners might be accepted through him! The day of gospel grace, is the only day for finding acceptance with God; and therefore every one should see to it, that he receive it without delay, and do not hear of it's glad tidings in vain. But how careful should ministers be; to behave in so unblameable a manner, as not to disgrace their sacred office, nor prejudice their hearers against the doctrines they preach! They are to approve themselves faithful, by their purity and knowledge, patience, kindness, and unfeigned love, in all their sufferings, trials, and labours, by the assistance of the holy Ghost, by a right use of the word of truth and the armour of righteousness, to guard them against temptations on every side, even such as arise from honour and dishonour, from evil report and good report: and they should labour, by divine grace, to behave as true and faithful persons, and to be made manifest, as such, in the consciences and esteem of real Christians, while they are traduced as deceivers, or are treated as mean and insignificant wretches, by others. In this way of acquitting themselves, behold how signally God appears for them! How much soever they may be chastened, they are wonderfully kept alive, till their Lord has done his work by them: How sad soever their outward condition may seem to be, they are filled with all joy and peace in believing: And how poor soever they be in this world, they possess all things in Christ, their head, and are instruments of making many rich toward God. O how freely and affectionately are their hearts and mouths open to their flocks; and what a reasonable return is it, that their people's hearts should be enlarged in like love to them! For they are neither straitened in the love of their pastors, nor in their ministrations of the promises; but all their straitness lies within themselves, in their own carnality and unbelief. And how concerned should believers be for grace, to enable them to live answerable to the exalted privileges, by which God has honoured and distinguished them; to abstain from every thing, that has the least aspect of falling in with any corruptions, that lie in opposition to the purity of their faith, worship, and obedience; and to take heed that they be not unequally yoked with unbelievers in any relation, or in any sense, that tends to ensnare and defile them. For they can no more have Christian fellowship with others in sinful, superstitious and idolatrous customs, than righteousness, and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, or the temple of God and idols can be reconciled and harmonize. And, to encourage the people of God to separate from every thing polluting, and offensive to him, he, who is the Lord Almighty, has promised that, in their relinquishing such things, they shall be no losers; but that he will dwell in them, and commune with them; will receive them into his special care and protection; and will be the best of fathers to them, and treat them as his sons and daughters, whom he has made heirs of eternal life.

### N O T E.

\* The substance of this promise is found in the places referred to in the paraphrase; one relating to the New Testament church, and the other immediately to *Salomon*, which

the apostle may be supposed to apply to all true believers, in like manner as the promise made particularly to *Isaiah*, is applied to them in *Heb.* xiii. 5.

## C H A P. VII.

*The apostle shuts up his last argument with an exhortation to universal holiness, 1. Intreats the whole church to bear the like affection to him, as he did to them, 2—4. Tells them how greatly he rejoiced, amidst all his tribulations, in the account, which Titus gave him, of their ready compliance with the orders of his former letter, and of its happy effect, as it produced their sorrowing to repentance, 5—12. And in the comfort that they and Titus had together, who found a kind reception, and saw such things among them, as answered the good report which the apostle had made of them, 13—16.*

## TEXT.

HAVING therefore these promises, (dearly beloved,) let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## PARAPHRASE.

BEING therefore favoured with such exceeding great and precious promises, as have been but now mentioned: (*Chap. vi. 16,—18.*) let us, my dearly beloved brethren, be excited and encouraged to labour, in a dependence on promised grace, and in hopes of promised glory, to purify ourselves, by believing applications to the blood and spirit of Christ for deliverance, and by a conscientious departure in heart and life, from all and every kind of iniquity, which is the worst of defilement; both from those sins, that are committed by, and infect the body, such as uncleanness, drunkenness, intemperance, &c. which make us like the beasts that perish; (*Psal. xlix. 12.*) and from those sins, that are most immediately acted by, and pollute the soul, such as falsehood, pride, malice, &c. which form us into the odious likeness of the Devil, that father of lies, and proud implacable enemy to God and man: (*John viii. 44, 1. Tim. iii. 6, and 1 Pet. v. 8.*) and let us not only, through the spirit, mortify the evil deeds of the body of sin; (see the paraphrase on *Rom. viii. 13.*) but likewise press after universal holiness, as those that are not already perfect, but are reaching forth to those things which are before, till we shall have completed our course of obedience, and arrived at sinless perfection, (*Phil. iii. 12, 13.*) by maintaining a solemn reverence of God, and by the powerful workings of his new covenant-fear, which he, as our God, has put into our hearts, that we might not depart from him. (*Jer. xxxii. 40.*)

3 Receive us :  
we

2 But, to return \*, I earnestly intreat you to receive me

## N O T E

\* It would have been a juster division of the chapters, if this verse had been made the first of the seventh chapter, and the first of this had closed the sixth: For the first verse practically shuts up that part of the discourse

which the apostle was then upon; and there appears to be little or no connection between this verse and that: But here he brings in again what he, every now and then, had touched upon before, as particularly in chap. iii. 1.

&c.

we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man we have defrauded no man.

me, together with my other faithful brethren, into your good opinion, and cordial affection; to embrace the doctrine we preach in the name of Christ; and to own and submit to the authority, we have received from him. To engage you hereunto, be pleased to consider, that we have never given you occasion to do otherwise; but can appeal to God, and to our own and your consciences, that we have never injured the reputation of any of you, nor any way hurt you, but always aimed at doing you good; nor have ever corrupted any of your minds with errors, or by flattering speeches, gifts, or bribes; nor have ever over-reached you, or made a gain of you, as your false teachers have endeavoured to do. (*chap. xi. 3, 20.*)

3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that you are in our hearts to die and live with you.

3 I do not insist on these things from any ill will toward you, or as though I suspected, or would charge and condemn you, in the bulk, for having slandered us with insinuations, that we had wronged, corrupted, or defrauded you; no, I can't entertain such an unkind and uncharitable thought of you: For I have already told you, (*chap. iii. 2.*) that *ye are our commendatory epistle, written in our hearts*; and such is our ardent affection to the generality of you, and intire confidence in you, that we could not only venture our reputation in your hands, with the greatest satisfaction; but, were we not called to important services in other places, we could very gladly spend, and be spent intirely for you, (*chap. xii. 15.*) and could cheerfully live and die with you, as a people heartily loving us, and beloved by us.

4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you; I am filled with comfort. I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

4 It is from my affectionate concern for you, that I use the utmost freedom and plainness in writing to you, about the disorders that have sprung up among you; and it is from the confidence I have in the major part of you, that I so greatly rejoice and glory in you, while I think of you as obedient children, whom I have ministerially begotten to Christ through the gospel; (*1 Cor. iv. 15.*) and that I speak so highly, even to a sort of boasting of you, wheresoever I come: (*Chap. ix. 2.*) I am filled with abundant consolation, in every review of what God has done by me among you; and it is, beyond expression, the joy of my heart, amidst all the reproaches and heavy afflictions, that have befallen me, and my companions in labour, from professed friends, and

#### N O T E.

&c. and iv. 7. &c. and v. 11, 13. and what he had much in his thoughts, as one main drift in *this*, as well as in his former epistle, which was to take off the factions

part of the church from their false teachers, and to preserve his interest, as an apostle of Christ in their affections, and assure them of his own toward them.

and from secret and open enemies, to hear that things are now so much better with you, than I feared.

5 For, when we were come in to Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side without were fightings, within were fears.

5 For as when I came to *Troas*, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not *Titus*, my brother there, to give me an account of the state of your affairs; (*chap. ii. 12, 13.*) so when we came into *Macedonia*, we had no rest, night or day, in body or mind, both because, for some time, we could not meet with him there neither, and because additional troubles attacked us from every quarter: We had warm contentions and struggles with many surrounding adversaries, that violently opposed us and our doctrine: and, at the same time, we were full of anxious and distressing thoughts in our own minds, lest your false teachers should gain ground, and pervert any of you; and so both we, and the gospel should lose credit, among you. (*Chap. xi. 2, 3.*)

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of *Titus*:

6 But, at length, our gracious God, the Father of mercies, (*chap. i. 3, 4.*) whose endearing character it is, to comfort them that are dejected and brought low and who only knows how and when, and is both willing and able, to do it, was pleased to relieve, encourage, and comfort us by means of the happy arrival of our beloved and faithful brother *Titus*, who came, by the good hand of the Lord, just in season to us.

7 And not by his coming only but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

7 And this consolation was occasioned, not only by his safe return to us, which we had been long wishing and praying for; but in a special manner, by the delightful account, which he gave us of the great satisfaction and pleasure he received, in conversing with you, and in finding things to be in so good a state among you: As for instance, when he rehearsed to us, at large, what he had seen and heard of your strong desire to comply with the counsels and warnings, that I had sent you for rectifying various disorders, and particularly in what related to the incestuous person; (*1 Cor. v.*) when he further told us of your deep and humble lamentation, that such scandal should be thereby brought on the name and ways of Christ, and so much connived at by the church, and that such offence and grief should be thereby caused to myself, as well as many others; and when he assured us of your affectionate zeal and concern for my person, reputation and authority, as an apostle of Christ, after all the sharp rebukes, which in faithfulness I had given you: These were the things, that exceedingly heightened the pleasure of his good company, and gave me more abundant joy, than I before had fear concerning you.



8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did receive that the same epistle made you sorry though it were but for a season.

8 For though what I wrote in my former letter with some severity, as the circumstances of things then required, did occasion great grief and trouble to you; yet since, by the blessing of God, it has produced these happy effects, I do not regret my dealing so roundly with you; though, I must confess, so great was my love and tenderness of spirit for you, that, as I said, (*chap. ii. 4.*) I wrote it *with many tears*, and could not but be heartily grieved to think what a necessity I was under of using so much sharpness with you; and I was afterwards concerned, for fear it might wound some truly gracious souls, to whom it did not belong, and who ought rather to have been comforted; and had it, after all, failed of it's desired success, and had I thereupon only consulted what might be agreeable to my own friendly dispositions toward you, I should have repented that I had given you any disturbance\*: For, as I then apprehended, so I now find, by what *Titus* tells me, that the forementioned epistle affected you with extreme distress and trouble (though, blessed be God, it was only for a little while, inasmuch as ye were soon influenced by it to set to rights what was amiss among you; and so that short sorrow was turned into lasting joy.)

9 Now I rejoice not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

9 I now heartily rejoice, not because ye were made uneasy, as though I took pleasure in your grief for its own sake; but because your sorrow worked in an ingenious manner, to humble and prove you, and bring you to sincere repentance, for the evils that had been found among you: For ye were afflicted, and mourned with a religious frame of spirit, like true penitents, with a self-abasing, contrite sense of the evil of sin, as committed against God, with humble confessions of it, and with full purpose of heart, to have no further fellowship with it; but to put it away in such a manner, as is according to the mind and will of God, (*κατα Θεον*) by the assistance of his Spirit, and to the honour of his great and holy name: These kindly workings of godly sorrow were wrought in you, to the end that, (*να*) instead of being provoked and enraged on one hand, or discouraged on the other, to the injury of your own souls, by what I said, (*ver. 8, 12.*) ye might make so good

#### N O T E.

\* It is not to be supposed that the apostle ever did properly repent of any thing, that he had wrote under divine inspiration; and therefore we are to understand what he here says about it, as signifying only such a sort of sorrow as one would have, were he to repent of what he had done, or only what would be natural for him to go into, as he

tenderly loved them, in case any irksome measures, which he had taken with them, should not answer their desired end: Accordingly the original words, (*ὃ μεταμελοῦμαι ἡ καὶ μεταμελοῦμαι*) are rendered by some critics, and the latitude of the sense will bear it, *I do not repent, though I should have repented.*

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

good an improvement of it, as to receive no hurt in any respect whatsoever, but all desirable advantage by it.

10 For spiritual grief and contrition of soul, like yours, godward, and according to his will, on account of offences committed against him, has the happiest tendencies and effects: It produces that evangelical repentance, under apprehensions of the mercy of God in Christ, which consists in a thorough change of the mind, heart, and life, with regard to sin and duty; and is connected with, and will certainly issue in, a complete deliverance from sin and wrath, and advancement to eternal glory; yea, in the very nature of things, as well as by the ordination of God, it always goes before, and is practised, more or less, till an actual enjoyment of final salvation; and so this is an excellent sort of repentance, that need not, ought not, nor ever was, or will be, repented of: There can be no cause for repenting of this; on the contrary there is the highest reason to choose and cherish it, to rejoice in it, and bless God for it. But the anxiety, trouble, and impatient vexation of spirit, which men of carnal minds have, relating to the present world \*, on account of their losses and disappointments, disgrace and troubles, especially when they have brought them upon themselves; and the distress and anguish, that the awakned consciences of the men of this world feel, in terrible and despairing reflections on their folly, guilt, and danger, merely on account of the mischief, their evil doings have exposed them to, increase their sin and torment, impair their health, (*Prov. xvii. 22.*) and sometimes, as in the case of *Ahitophel* and *Judas*, (*2 Sam. xvii. 23.* and *Matth. xxvii. 5.*) make them lay violent hands upon themselves; or, at least, one way or other, hasten their death and ruin, both as to the life which now is, and that which is to come.

11 For, behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what careful-

11 Now it is the first, and not the last of these kinds of sorrow and repentance, that my letter was the means of producing in you: For observe, as I myself do with great pleasure and thankfulness to God, your ingenuous mourning on account of what ye have done, and of what has been found among you, against him, has, through divine grace, wrought in a holy manner, and brought

#### N O T E.

† Since the world may be taken either for the things of the world, as in *Matth. xvi. 26.* and *1 John ii. 15,—17.* or for the carnal men of the world, as in *John xvii. 6, 9, 12, 16, 23.* and *1 John v. 19.* the Paraphrase is formed with a view to both: and methinks

the temper of the men of the world, in their sorrowing, which works eternal, as well as temporal death, stands in a beautiful opposition to the better spirit that the *Corinthians* had discovered in their sorrowing, which worked repentance to salvation.

fulness it wrought in you, yea *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge? In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

brought forth fruits meet for repentance \*. Observe what thoughtfulness, care, and diligence it worked in you, to comply with my orders, and to approve yourselves to God in rectifying what was amiss: Yea, what happy influence it had upon you to take such measures, as might furnish out a plea (*απολογία*) against any accusation, as if ye would partake with the incestuous person in his guilt, or would allow of, indulge, or connive at any sin in yourselves or others; Yea, what holy indignation and warm resentment it raised in your souls against your own iniquities, and against the sins of that delinquent and his abettors, who had so notoriously dishonoured the name of Christ, and both troubled and defiled the church: Yea, what an awful reverential fear of God, and of his displeasure and sore rebukes, it worked in you, together with an humble jealousy over yourselves, and cautious fear and concern, lest any accursed thing should still be found with you; or lest, through the power of temptation, ye should fall into the like, or any other sin again, to provoke the Lord to anger: Yea, what earnest desire it excited in you after a thorough reformation, by putting away that evil person, and every evil thing from among you; (1 Cor. v. 13.) and by doing what might be well pleasing to God through Jesus Christ, and might be to your own and others edification, satisfaction, advantage, and comfort: Yea, what sacred zeal it inflamed you with for the glory of God, the credit of religion and of my apostolic authority, and for the peace and order of the church: Yea, behold, how it made you take a sort of holy vengeance upon yourselves, like persons that could not tell how to forgive yourselves, in reflection on your own defaults; and how it engaged you to inflict deserved punishment on the scandalous offender, by casting him out of your holy communion. In all these penitential and commendable ways of expressing your godly sorrow, with regard to what has been so faulty among you, ye have shewn that your consciences have been purged from its guilt by the blood of Christ; and that ye, as a church

#### N O T E.

\* It appears from what follows in this and the next verses, that the godly sorrow here spoken of, has a particular reference to its influence on the conduct of the church, for the correcting of their sin and error, with respect to the incestuous person, while instead of continuing to be puffed up, and not to mourn on his account, (1 Cor. v. 2.) they now were deeply humbled in reflection upon his gross miscarriage, and upon their former unconcernedness about it, and accordingly

had proceeded to pass a proper censure upon him for it. And yet as, in the preceding verse, the apostle calls it *godly sorrow*, which *worketh repentance to salvation*, we may likewise consider his description of it in this verse, with a reference to that evangelical repentance which is unto salvation, or *εὐαγγελική*, as it is expressed Acts xi. 18. and therefore I have managed the Paraphrase so, as to take in both these views; though it may be thought too long.

church, stand clear from all further charges on that account, as being forgiven of God, and no longer to be reproached, or reprov'd for it, by men.

12 Wherefore though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

12 This cannot but be an extreme satisfaction to me: For though I wrote to you with some smartness, particularly about the incestuous person, it was not from any pique or prejudice against him, who had dealt so injuriously in defiling his father's wife, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 1.) nor from any pleasure, that I had in the thought of his being chastized for it; nor was it from any partiality, through favour or affection, toward the father himself, who had been so ill used by him; no, nor was it *barely* to reclaim the one, and, as far as in me lay, to do justice to the other, though this is what I had much at heart; but it principally proceeded from the sincere concern, which I had for you, as in the sight and presence of the heart-searching God, and from an earnest desire of discovering it in the most effectual manner to you, that ye might be preserved from the infection and the blast, which such a person's continuing among you might have brought upon you; and that the glory of Christ, and the honour and purity of the whole church might not suffer, through their neglect of doing the duty, which in that case was incumbent upon them.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

13 When therefore I and others of my brethren heard, that ye had in such a laudable manner acquitted yourselves, by casting that infamous sinner out of the church, to your own great peace and comfort; we exceedingly rejoiced at it, and were greatly refreshed with the comfort, which ye thereby have given us: And this our joy was the more abundantly increased, on account of the satisfaction, which our dear brother *Titus* found in what ye had done; because his soul, who is affectionately and solicitously careful about you, (*ver. 15. and chap. viii. 16*) was mightily revived and cheered, under all his grief and concern for you, when he saw what an excellent spirit, and becoming behaviour appeared in the whole church; and when he related it to us. This, I say, adds greatly, and in a special manner, to my joy.

14 For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting which

14 For if in my former conversation with him, I spoke of you with high commendation and confidence concerning your faith, and your affectionate regards to me, as your spiritual Father, I have now no cause to be ashamed of it, as though I had said more of you than ye deserved; but as I have always preached the truth of the gospel, and spoke in sincerity, and nothing but the truth to you; so I am exceeding glad to find that ye have so fully answered my character of you, and that the fact

which I made before Titus is found a truth.

11 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembreth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

now proves, that I kept within the bounds of modesty and truth, in all the encomiums I gave of you to Titus.

15 And his (σπλάγχνα) inmost bowels of love toward you are most abundantly warmed, and tenderly moved, in every reflection on your ready compliance, as a church, with my apostolic orders and admonitions; which discovered itself in the respectful manner, with which ye received him, as coming from me to enforce them; and in your solicitous watchfulness, care and caution, and deep concern, lest he should find any thing among you, that might offend and grieve him; and lest, through the treachery of your own hearts, and the subtilty of Satan, ye should not duly improve his faithful, kind, and tender counsel and advice.

16 It is therefore an unspeakable pleasure to me, that I have not been deceived in my expectations from you; and that I have now still so much further ground of confidence, that ye will pay a dutiful respect to my character, and a religious regard to all that I, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, may hereafter enjoin upon you.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What blessed assistances and encouragements do the gracious promises of a heavenly Father afford his children, for engaging them to depart from all iniquity in heart and life, and to go on in the fear of the Lord, till their sanctification be perfected! With what freedom and boldness may ministers claim an attention to their message in the name of Christ, while they can appeal to the consciences of their people, as witnesses to their integrity, disinterestedness, and affectionate concern for the good of their souls, in delivering it! With what pleasure do they receive all notices for the success of their labours! And what a noble support is this to them under all their tribulations, whether they arise from fightings without, or fears within! It is exceeding grievous to them to be under a necessity of speaking severe things to the distressing of those, whom they had much rather comfort: But, O the joy! when it produces in communities, or in particular persons not the sorrow of this world, which works death; but godly sorrow, which, works repentance to salvation, and which is every way worth having, and appears with such distinguishing evidence, as proves it to be sincere: And how convincing are the tokens of this, when it works in professed penitents, with a conscientious carefulness against all sin; with an utter disallowance of it; with holy indignation against themselves for it; with an awful reverence of God, and humble fear of relapses; with earnest desire to have no more fellowship with it; with an ardent zeal for the glory of God; and with such a religious revenge upon *that*, which has been so dishonourable and provoking to him, as to pursue it in acts of mortification, till it be utterly slain within them! And how happy is it when gospel churches, with a like temper of spirit, and with an obediential subjection to the authority of Christ, as made known by his servants, clear themselves from scandalous members; and that to the bringing of them to true repentance! This puts an honour upon churches, and confirms the good opinion, which their ministers at any time had entertained, and expressed concerning them; and gives both pastors and people a sweet partnership and communion in each others joys. But, after all, it is God alone, who comforts them that are cast down.

## C H A P. VIII.

*The apostle having vindicated his character, and expressed his satisfaction in the regard that the Corinthian church had shewn to him, takes that occasion to remind them of his exhortation, in the former epistle, to charitable contributions for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem: This he enforces upon them, by the laudable example of the Macedonian churches, 1,—8. By the love and grace of Christ to them, 9. By the willingness, which they themselves had shewn to this good work a year ago, and the advantage would accrue to themselves by it, 10—15. And then he recommends Titus and two other brethren, who, at his request, came to them upon this very business, 16—24.*

## TEXT.

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW, brethren, according to the confidence I have in your love and obedience, (*chap. vii. 15, 16.*) I would again recommend the poor saints at Jerusalem to your christian compassion: (*1 Cor. xvi. 2, 3.*) And in order to the engaging of your charitable contributions for their relief, who, through the original poverty of some, and through persecutions, wars, and the late famine, (*Acts xi. 28, 29.*) that have affected them all, are reduced to very necessitous circumstances; it may be proper that we acquaint you (*ὑπορίσκομεν υμῶν*) with the powerful influence of the grace of God \*, which was wrought effectually in the Gentile churches of Macedonia, such as those at *Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea*, (*Acts chap. xvi. and xvii.*) to incline them to exercise their christian love toward their Jewish brethren, in largely contributing to their help, notwithstanding the difference that there is in some sentiments between them, and the prejudices, which they have too much entertained on that account, one against the other.

\* How that in a great trial of affliction.

2 Ye must know then, that, amidst the fore persecutions of these Macedonian churches themselves, (*Acts xvi. 19, &c. and xvii. 5, 13.*) which are the trials of their faith

## N O T E.

\* The grace of God (*τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ*) here undoubtedly refers to the liberality of the Macedonians; and with the like-reference it is afterwards in this chapter rendered a gift, *ver. 4.* and at other times grace, *ver. 6, 7, 19.* This being called the grace of God, by a metonymy, which puts the cause for the effect, in the very entrance on this subject, seems to be with a design to lead our thoughts both here, and all along afterwards, to the free favour or grace of God, as the spring and cause of the liberality itself, and of that Christian grace of love, which was its principle in the Macedonian churches, and di-

tinguished it from merely common humanity, whereby persons are inclined to relieve their fellow-creatures in distress: Accordingly, at the close of the apostle's discourse on this point, *chap. ix. 14.* speaking of the like charity of the Corinthians, he calls it the grace of God in them; and as what is here rendered *bestowed on the churches*, properly signifies *given in, or by the churches*, (*ἡ δόξα ἐν ὑμῖν ἐκκλησιῶν*) it may intimate that this effect of the grace of God was wrought in the Macedonians, and was his gift by them to the poor saints at Jerusalem. The paraphrase is therefore formed to admit of both.

fiction, the abundance of their joy and their poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, (I bear record,) yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own-selves

faith and patience; the greatness of their joy in the Holy Ghost, (1 *Thess.* i. 6.) and the exceeding straits of their own worldly circumstances have concurred, with rich advantage to the producing of a noble generosity in them; their joy exciting them to it, and their own poverty putting such a lustre upon it \*, as may well provoke others, of greater wealth, to be still more abundantly liberal.

3 For, as I can witness for them, and now mention it to their honour, they voluntarily, and out of choice, went into this generous and compassionate benevolence, to the utmost of their ability; yea, so heartily zealous and earnest were they in it, that they even did more than they could well spare, from the spontaneous motion of their own liberal souls, under divine influence.

4 So far were they from needing to be pressed to it, that, of their own accord, they desired me and others of my fellow servants, with great importunity, to take their free-will offering, which the grace of God had excited them to, under our care; and to give ourselves the trouble of performing, what is indeed properly the office of *Deacons* †, by conveying and distributing their bounty, in token of our fellowship with them, and of the communion which they had, and desired to have, with the poor afflicted christians of *Judea*, whom they esteem as sanctified in Christ Jesus, and holy in resemblance of him.

5 And this they did with a freedom, cheerfulness, and generosity, not barely answerable to the highest hopes, that we could have from them, considering the scantiness of their circumstances; but, over and above all this, to shew that they acted herein, upon truly religious principles, they first of all, even before they put their contributions into our hands, jointly surrendered up and devoted their own-selves, as a church, with all that they are and have, in a solemn manner to the honour and service, influence, government, and disposal of the Lord

#### NOTES.

\* The apostle's mentioning the *Macedonian*, poverty, to enhance their liberality, is very beautiful, and carries a gentle insinuation to the *Corinthians*, that they, who so much exceeded the *Macedonians* in riches, (see the note on 1 Cor. iv. 8.) ought to exceed them also in bounty.

† As it is well known that the deacon's office takes its name from the words, (*διακονία* and *δυναμειν*) that are used here, and in ver. 19, 20. and are rendered *ministering* and *administering*; and as the service which the apostle in all these places speaks of, properly belongs to that office, I have kept this view

of the expressions, where they occur in the present discourse, to shew that though deacons were chosen, (Acts vi.) to take care of the poor Christians; yet as that work originally belonged to the apostles, it was not, by the institution of a peculiar office to aid them in it, to alienated from them, but that they had still a right to act in it, as opportunity offered, and their principal employment would permit. The same may also be said of the ordinary pastors of churches. See Dr Owen's true nature of a gospel church, part II. pag. 281, &c.

Jesus

Selves to the Lord  
and unto us by  
the will of God :

Jesus, as their head, Saviour, and King; and then, God directing and moving them to it by his Spirit, they with one consent committed themselves to us, as his ministering servants, to conduct them and all their affairs, according to his holy will, as revealed in his word, and notified by the openings of his providence.

6 Inasmuch  
that we desired  
Titus, that as he  
had begun, so he  
would also finish  
in you the same  
grace also.

6. This excellent spirit, which appeared in them, moved us to entreat our brother *Titus*, that as, when he last visited you, he was so very acceptable to you, and had begun to stir you up to the exercise of this Christian grace of liberality, in making collections for the same charitable use; so he would undertake the business of coming to you again, to counsel, admonish, and encourage you to go on with this good work, till it be completed among you, as far as you purpose, and are able to contribute towards it.

7 Therefore as  
ye abound in every  
thing, in faith  
in utterance, and  
knowledge, and  
in all diligence,  
and in your love  
to us; see that ye  
abound in this  
grace also.

7. But as \* many of you are remarkably eminent in every other gift, as for instance, in the faith of Christ, which is fundamental to all the rest, in eloquence of speech, and in understanding the mysteries of the gospel, (1 Cor. i. 5, 7.) and in all studious endeavours to promote its interests, and the purity of your own church (Chap. vii. 11.) and particularly in your love to us, the ministers of Christ, which ye have given some signal testimonies of already; (Chap. vii. 13.—16.) so I only intreat that ye would act like yourselves, and like persons thus highly favoured of the Lord, with proportionable aboundings in this grace of Christian benevolence also.

8 I speak not  
by command-  
ment, but by oc-  
casion of the for-  
wardness of o-  
thers, and to  
prove the sinceri-  
ty of your love.

8. I don't, in this case, lay any absolute command upon you by my apostolic authority; nor do I impose any certain sum to be raised among you; no, I much rather choose that it should be a free-will offering, as God may incline your hearts to it, in proportion to your own circumstances: but I thought proper to take an occasion of recommending this noble duty to you, from the great readiness, that other Christians and churches have shewn to it, of their own accord, (ver. 3.) that ye might not come behind them in this, any more than in other spiritual attainments; and that by this fruit I might further try, prove, and know the genuineness of your professed affection to me, and of your love

#### N O T E.

\* I know not how the particles (*οὕτως*) which properly signify *but as*, come to be here translated *therefore as*, which is a very rare construction, and, instead of being necessary, seems to obscure the connection, and to sink the beauty of the admirable exhortation contained in this verse; and as

something must be supplied to complete the sentence, as it lies in the Greek, what I have substituted instead of *see*, toward the close of the verse, seems to keep up the spirit of the argument with much greater light and perspicuity, and to bring in the next verse with greater force of eloquence.



love to Christ himself, and to the saints for his sake, in imitation of, and return for, his matchless, exemplary, and endearing love to you.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

9. For ye cannot be utter strangers to, and I trust ye experimentally know, and seriously reflect upon, the surprising greatness of the free favour, love, and bounty of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who though, as the eternal Son of God, he was originally possessed of all the riches, glory and blessedness of the Deity, (*Rom ix. 5. and Col. ii. 9.*) and as the former of the world, *by whom, and for whom, all things were created,* (*Col. i. 16.*) he was the rightful Lord and proprietor of all the riches of the universe; and though, in his office capacity, he was the appointed heir of all things; (*Heb. i. 2.*) yet, in his tender compassion to you, for your salvation, he assumed human nature, and in that nature veiled his glory, and divested himself, as it were, of all his riches, with respect to his own use of them; and submitted, in the form of a servant, to the deepest poverty, amongst all his other sufferings unto death; insomuch that in his *birth*, he came of poor and mean parentage, was brought forth in a stable, *wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger;* (*Luke ii. 7.*) and in his *life*, though *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests;* ye he had not where to lay his head: (*Matth. viii. 20.*) the Lord of glory thus humbled, emptied, and denied himself, to the end, that, on account, and by means of his extreme and voluntary poverty, ye might be enriched with all the blessings of grace and glory, and with as many of the good things of this life, as ye enjoy, or as he sees to be best for you. Surely then ye ought to be constrained by this wonderful love of Christ, and to be influenced by such a striking example of bounty and goodness, to spare what ye can out of your temporal possessions for the comfort of your poor brethren, for whom he willingly condescended to undergo all this, as well as for you.

10 And herein I give my advice for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

10 And as your own honour and advantage, as well as duty, are nearly concerned in this affair, I would advise you to finish it out of hand: For this is in a special manner fit and becoming, proper and useful for you; and will shew that ye are rather examples to others herein, than they to you, (*chap. ix. 2.*) who, according to my directions, when I wrote to you last, (*1 Cor. xvi. 2.*) set on foot collections of this sort, and began not only to lay by something in store for them, but also to discover the greatest willingness, like persons in good earnest to engage in them, about a year ago; it

being so long since I recommended this service, and ye cheerfully consented to it.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, to there may be a performance also out of that which you have.

11 Now therefore let me intreat you to act up to character, and consummate what ye then so well began, that as, at that time, ye discovered great freedom and alacrity of mind for it; so the like pleasing readiness may now be shewn, in collecting together into one common stock, what ye have laid by, from week to week, for that purpose, according to your respective abilities, *as God has prospered you; that there may be no gatherings when I come.* (1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

12 For, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

12 For if, as has happily appeared in you, there be before hand a cheerful and determinate propensity of mind to charitable acts; and sincere contrivances and endeavours, that ye may have wherewith to distribute out of your temporal substance, to the glory of God, and the necessities of his poor; it is acceptable, not only to the churches, and to me, but, which is best of all, to Christ, himself, when it is done in proportion to a man's own circumstances, be they larger, or straiter, like the poor widow's who cast two mites into the treasury; (Luke xxi. 2, 3.) and not with vain glorious prodigality, or inconsiderate profuseness, that would be manifestly injurious to ones self and family, and especially that would be a giving of other peoples property, and running so far in debt, as to have no reasonable prospects of ever being able to discharge it.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened:

13 For nothing is farther from my intention, than to desire that other Christians, who are now in want should be enriched, or raised above the low rank, in which providence has placed them, by the abundance of your alms, and that at the same time ye yourselves should be overloaded, and so reduced and impoverished by an excess in your exhibitions to them; nor do I mean that the whole weight of supplying the exigencies of the poor saints should lie upon you, and that other churches, who are capable of assisting, should be excused from it.

14 But by an equality *that* now at this time your abun-

14 But what I aim at is, that there may be a proper proportion in your and their distributions to them that are in want, even such as is equal and fit for you severally to give, and for the poor to receive \*, that by this means

#### N O T E.

\* By an equality, as it is explained in the latter part of this, and in the next verse, is apparently meant, not a levelling scheme, which takes away personal property, but an equality with respect to the degrees of the benefactions, and the wants of the poor: And yet considering it in connection with

the preceding verses, there may possibly be some reference to an equality of proportion between the contributors themselves, in their giving according to their respective circumstances; and therefore I have glanced at that interpretation also.

abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality;

means, in the present situation of things, your affluence may afford a suitable and sufficient supply to their necessities: And this I desire of you now, in hope that if ever the providence of God should change hands, as it often does in the vicissitudes of this uncertain world by raising them up, and casting you down, he will also incline their hearts to return the favour, in due season, when out of their greater abundance they may minister a proper relief to your wants; that so upon the whole, there may be an equality in beneficence on both sides, and ye and they may be equally beholden to the brotherly love and bounty one of another, and all may be well provided for, in their turns, according to their respective occasions, as the *Israelites* were in the wilderness, by the wise and kind disposal of an immediate providence, for our instruction and imitation.

15 As it is written, he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack.

15 As it is divinely recorded (*Exod. xvi. 18.*) concerning the *manna*, which God gave them, in a miraculous way, for their subsistence, *he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack* the surplus of each person's gatherings being applied to the use of those, who, through infirmity or age, could not gather an homer full for themselves, which was the prescribed measure for every single person; so that there was neither superfluity, nor want, to either of them; but all were sufficiently supplied according to their exigencies: In like manner, they that have more of this world's goods, than they really need for themselves and their families, should be ready to distribute to their poor brethren, and not suffer them to lack necessary food, as remembering that God gives them their larger stores for this very purpose; and that the happiness of a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things, which he possesses. (*Luke. xii. 15.*)

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

16 And (<sup>1</sup>) blessed be God, that he has inspired our beloved brother *Titus* with the same fervent desire and diligent concern, as I myself had, to engage you in this excellent and important service, for your own sakes, as well as theirs that may be relieved by it.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation, but being more forward, of his own accord

17 For truly in his abundant affection to you, and confidence of his interest in your love: in his earnest desire that he might share in the honour of this service, and in his great zeal for the common cause of Christ, and compassion for the poor saints, he not only fell in at once with the very first motion, that was made to him to go, and excite you to the finishing of this charity; (*ver. 6.*) but being more eager for it of himself, than to need any exhortations to it, he of his own free choice

accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel, throughout all the churches;

19 (And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of our ready mind:)

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

choice \*, (*αὐταίρετος*) under divine influence, (*ver. 16.*) set out upon this errand to you.

18 We, who are concerned in this affair, have also sent with him, upon the same business, another eminent brother †, who is well known, and has obtained great reputation, in all the churches, that have seen or heard of him, for his light in the gospel, for his hearty attachment to it; and for his faithfulness, judgment, and zeal in preaching, and promoting it, by all possible means:

19 And who is not only esteemed and honoured at a high rate, wherever he comes; but was likewise chosen by the common suffrage of the churches, that had made collections on this occasion, which they testified according to their known custom, by the lifting up of their hands; (*ἡσυχασίας*) he was I say, in this manner chosen, by them, to accompany us to *Jerusalem* with their free gift, which the grace of God stirred them up to, and which is to be distributed by us, who are willing to perform the office of deacons therein for a time, (See the note on *ver. 4.*) to the honour of one and the same Lord Jesus, both theirs, yours, and ours; and to the giving you an opportunity of shewing your readiness of mind to concur with them in that design, as supposing that we should be equally acceptable to you.

20 Our desire of having other reputable servants of Christ joined with us in this office is, that we might be freed from all suspicion of fraud, or partiality, in the disposal of so large a charity; and might avoid the ill natured censures of our adversaries, as though we would embezzle, or misapply any part of this liberal fund which is now put into our hands, in order to it's being duly distributed by us.

21 In this method of proceeding, we have taken all imaginable care to execute this great trust, in such an honourable and disinterested manner, as may approve itself, not only to God, who knows our hearts, and whose eye is upon all our ways; but likewise to the consciences of all mankind, whether friends or enemies, that shall see and observe our conduct in it.

22 And

#### N O T E S.

\* What *Titus* is here said to do of *his own accord*, God is said to have put into his heart, *ver. 16.*; which shews that the way of God's working upon, and determining a man's heart, is so far from making any infringement upon the liberty of his will, that it rather strengthens and secures it.

† It is not certain, nor is it of any importance for us to know who this, and the

other brother mentioned, *ver. 11.* were; whether *Barnabas*, *Silas*, *Mark*, *Apollis*, *Epenetus*, *Sossicles*, or *Luke*, as has been variously conjectured: The church at *Corinth* could be at no loss about it; but, whoever they were, they seem to have been ministers, because it is here said of one of them, that *his praise is in the gospel*; and both are said to be *in the glory of Christ*, *ver. 13.*

21 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which *I have* in you.

23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner, and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of as they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

22 And as in the mouth of two or at most three witnesses, every word is established, (*Matth. xviii. 16.*) we have sent to you, along with the above-mentioned, (see the note on *ver. 18.*) a third excellent brother, who has often been tried and proved to be very active and industrious, as well as faithful, in his management of several other affairs, that have been committed to him; but in this case, is animated to more than ordinary diligence upon the recommendation he has heard me give of you as a church of Christ, in whom I have the greatest satisfaction, that ye will not be behind hand with other churches; but will cheerfully receive, and attend to what he may say, in conjunction with his other brethren to excite your liberality in perfecting this free-will offering.

23 As to the characters of all these persons, if any that are strangers to them, or would invidiously carp at one or another of them, should enquire after them, or raise any dispute about them; let such know that, as to Titus he is my associate in the work of the ministry and my fellow-labourer in those things, that relate to your assistance, comfort, and edification: Or if any question be asked about the two other of our brethren, that are sent with him; it is sufficient to say, that they are approved messengers of the *Macedonian* churches who have deputed them to transact this affair, as persons every way qualified for it; and they are Christians and ministers, (see the note on *ver. 18.*) that have behaved themselves in a manner, which has already brought great honour to the name of Christ, and are instruments of promoting his glory, who has made them faithful to himself.

24 Therefore ye need make no difficulty of receiving them, with the greatest affection, respect, and confidence; and I beseech you to do it in such a manner, as shall give to them, and to the churches that have sent them, an evident demonstration of the sincerity of your love (*ver. 8.*) to Christ, to them, to me, and to the poor saints at *Jerusalem*, for his sake; and as shall shew that the great things I have said of you, and my glorying in you, as a generous, faithful, and affectionate people, is not a vain boast, but exactly according to truth.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What an excellent grace is Christian benevolence, in relieving the poor, and especially such as are of the household of faith! It is wrought in us by the power of divine grace; it proves the sincerity of our love to Christ, and to his members for his sake; it is strongly recommended by the matchless grace of our Lord,

Lord Jesus, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we thro' his poverty might be made rich; and it turns to the spiritual account of the pious benefactors themselves, who may likewise hope that, if ever they should be reduced, God will incline the hearts of others to be assistant to them, in a return of equal kindness. How pleasant is it to see a forwardness in this, and every other good work, while some of their own accord, and yet under divine influence, set an example of it to other Christians, according to the utmost of their ability; and others are equally ready to encourage it, and assist in finishing it, according to the pressing occasions that call for it! A little that is given in love, and with a willing mind, by those that are in strait circumstances, is a high commendation of their liberality; and yet, as the proportion of alms-deeds is accepted according to what a man has; so some ought not to be unreasonably burdened, to the caring, much less to the enriching of others; nor ought any to give what is not their own: But all charity, as well as every thing else, ought to be managed with such prudence and faithfulness, and in such a disinterested and honourable way, as may approve itself to God, as done in his sight, and even to the consciences of the whole world; and as may cut off all occasions of blame, or even of suspicions of fraud, partiality, or selfish designs. How happy is it when ministers and private Christians behave at such a rate, as is to the glory of Christ, and as spreads their praises among the saints, and begets a mutual affection to, and confidence in one another! What a beauty is there in the order of churches, that first give their own selves to the Lord with joint consent, and then to the conduct of his servants, according to the will of God! And how sweet is their harmony and communion, when the messengers of some churches are well recommended to, and are received, with respect and honour, by others!

## C H A P. IX.

*The apostle excuses his sending Titus, and the two other brethren that accompanied him, to collect their alms, notwithstanding the confidence he had in their own readiness to that good work, 1,—5. He further encourages them by several arguments to be liberal and cheerful in it, 6,—14. And shuts up his discourse, on this head, with a thanksgiving to God for his unspeakable gift, 15.*

## TEXT.

FOR, as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you.

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you

## PARAPHRASE.

I Desire nothing more, relating to your proposed benevolence, than that ye would act according to my just expectations from you (*chap. viii. 24.*) for as to your charitable collection, which is to be conveyed and distributed to the poor saints at *Jerusalem*, the generosity, piety, and compassion of your temper render it needless for me to write so many things, as might easily be offered to stir you up to it \*, or to trouble you with any other letter about it.

2 For I am fully satisfied, with respect to the strong propensions, resolutions, and alacrity of your own minds, to engage in this excellent service; on account of which

I have

## N O T E.

\* As the apostle afterwards urges several arguments to excite the *Corinthians* in this charity, *ver. 6. &c.* his saying, *It is superfluous*

*for me to write to you about it*, must be understood in some such restrained sense, as is given in the paraphrase.

you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked many.

I have spoke of you, with pleasure and confidence, to the churches of *Macedonia*, telling them that the christians in *Achaia*, of which *Corinth* is a principal city, were extremely willing, and had begun to make their contributions, for the use of those poor brethren, the last year; (*chap. viii. 10.*) and the same of your laudable and fervent zeal herein, has raised a noble ambition in many of them, that heard me speak of it, to follow your good example.

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

3 But notwithstanding all my confidence in you, I thought proper to join in sending *Titus*, and his two companions aforementioned (*chap. viii. 17. 18, 22.*) not from any remaining suspicion of you, as if ye would be backward to finish what ye have so well begun; but that our glorying in you, with regard to this particular point, may not in any degree be made void; my meaning is, that according to what I have told them, (*ver. 2.*) and have now suggested to you, (*chap. viii. 11.*) ye may be indeed thoroughly prepared to put your money, as ready gathered, into our hands, when I and other messengers may call upon you for it.

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we, (that we say not you) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

4 So that the design of sending these brethren is chiefly to acquaint you with our intended journey for this purpose; lest, if any of our *Macedonian* friends accompany me, it should happen that, through your not knowing when to expect us, or not apprehending the need of haste, they should find that the work is still depending, and not completed; and lest, in that case, I and others of my brethren should meet with a disappointment of our hopes, and so be confounded before them, on account of the honourable things, that we have said to them, with the utmost assurance on this head, concerning you: This would turn greatly to our reproach, not to say also to yours.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye

5 I therefore judged it necessary, for your sakes, as well as for our own and the common credit of christianity, to intreat the above mentioned brethren, that they would make you a visit beforehand, to let you know when ye may look for us; and to assist you in dispatching every thing, that may be requisite for getting together the whole of your beneficence which may be called a  *blessing*, (*εὐλογία*) as it is by the blessing of God, that ye are enabled, and inclined to do so much good to others; as he will continue to bless you in, and after it; and as his poor bless his name, speak honourably and affectionately of you, and implore his blessing upon you, for it; The design, I say, of these brethren's coming is, that ye receiving previous notice by them, a-

ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work;

gainst what time this bounty of yours should be ready gathered, it may be so, before we come; and may thereby evidently appear to be, as I make no doubt but it is, freely given, as a grateful acknowledgment of the favour of God to yourselves, and with a desire of being blessings to others; and that it is not extorted from you by our presence and importunity, as though ye were a covetous people, loth to part with it.

6 But as the sum to be raised among you, *that* must be left to your own conscience and discretion; only to prevent disheartning and unbelieving objections, as though what ye give to others were all loss to yourselves, I desire you to remember, that, as in the husbandman's casting his seed into the earth, he, who sows with a niggardly sparing hand, can expect but a very small crop, when he comes to reap it; but he who freely scatters his seed abroad, may hope, by the blessing of God, for a plentiful harvest: So *to the merciful, God will shew himself merciful*; (Psal. xviii. 25.) and, in the ordinaty dispensations of providence, he will proportion his blessings to the straitness, or liberality of your charitable contributions; *insomuch that there is that scatters, and yet increases; and there is that withholds more than is meet, but it tends to poverty.* (Prov. xi. 24.)

7 Let every one seriously consider this; and then let him give according to what he deliberately thinks, in his own heart and conscience, is fit and proper for one in his circumstances; and let him do it with a free and cheerful spirit, and not with reluctance or secret repining, like one that grieves at what he parts with; nor by constraint, like one who, through shame, or over-pressing, or some sinister motive, cannot tell how to avoid it: For the great and blessed God, whose goodness is his glory, takes pleasure in one that imitates his own free bounty, by giving with an open heart and hand; that *draws out his soul to the hungry*, (Isa. lviii. 10.) and cheerfully lays hold on every opportunity of making them comfortable.

8 And the all sufficient God, who delights in mercy, is undoubtedly every way able to cause your liberality, as well as every other grace of his spirit to increase abundantly in you, to the end that, being contented with such things as ye have, and being plentifully supplied with all the good things, that pertain to life and godliness, ye may be still more and more capable of, and heartily engaged in, this and every other good work, to which he calls you: And ye have no room to doubt



9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

but that he will do it, since he has given his own promise to encourage your faith herein ;

9 As it is written in the sacred oracles, concerning the merciful man, (*Psal. cxii. 9.*) he has scattered abroad, with a liberal hand out of his worldly substance, for the good of others ; he has cheerfully given to the relief of the poor and needy, which may be called his *personal* righteousness, because it is one great part of moral righteousness, and because he only acts, as a just and faithful steward, in distributing his Lord's goods for the noble purposes, for which he entrusted them with him : And this sort of righteousness, perpetually abides, in it's *exercise*, as God will continue to dispose him to it, and make him capable of it ; and in its happy *fruits* and *effects*, as the objects of his pity, will receive lasting benefit by it ; as he himself *shall not be forsaken* of his God, or of good men, and *his seed shall be blessed* ; (*Psal. xxxvii. 25, 26.*) and as he shall be had in honourable remembrance upon earth, and for ever in heaven. (*Psal. cxii. 6.*)

10 Now he that ministrereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ;)

10 Now my heart's desire and prayer of faith to God is, that he, whose blessing makes rich, and who, in the world of nature, not only provides food for the current year, but gives seed to the husbandman for sowing again ; and who, in the moral world, gives the liberal man, not only enough for a supply of his own wants, but also ability and a heart to do good in distributions to others ; my earnest and believing prayer, I say, for you, my generous friends and brethren, is, that he would continue to seed you with food convenient for you ; and would turn what ye give to others to the best account, and even restore it an hundred-fold into your own bosoms, both as to spirituals and temporals ; and that he would enable you to abound yet more and more in this, and every other *fruit of righteousness, which is, by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God* : (*Phil. i. 11.*) \* faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it.

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth

11 And may he plentifully bestow upon you every blessing of this world and a better, that shall dispose you for, and make you capable of persevering and increasing in, all liberality, (*ἀπλότης*) with rich abundance, and with simplicity and singleness of heart, free from any

#### N O T E.

\* One of *Stephanas's* copies, and the *Clement*, with several others, read *minister, multiply* and *increase* in the *future* tense; and so make them promises of what God will do. (*Vid. Mill. Nov. Test.*) But whether we fol-

low those readings or not, an apostolic prayer may be considered as containing the nature of a promise, especially when supported by other promises, such as are found in the preceding context.

causeth through  
us thanksgiving  
to God.

11 For the ad-  
ministration of  
this service not  
only supplieth the  
want of the saints,  
but is abundant  
also by many  
thanksgivings un-  
to God;

12 (Whiles, by  
the experiment  
of this minis-  
tration, they glorify  
God for your pro-  
fessed subjection  
unto the gospel  
of Christ, and  
for your liberal  
distribution unto  
them, and unto  
all men :)

14 And by their  
prayer for you,  
which long after  
you for the ex-  
ceeding grace of  
God in you.

15 Thanks be  
unto God for his  
unspeakable gift.

any sinister views according to what appears in your good beginnings, which engage many souls in great thankfulness to God for raising up such instruments of seasonable supplies, through our means, who excited you to them, and are to distribute them !

12 For our officiating in preparing, and disposing of this public collection, is not only an ample relief of the necessities of the poor saints, which cannot but be a great satisfaction to a benevolent, generous, and compassionate mind ; but it likewise abundantly redounds to the glory of God, through the manifold thanksgivings that are, and will be offered to him on that account, by myself, by those that share in your bounty, and by all that are friends to Christ and his poor.

13 This revenue of glory accrues to God, while by the proof and experience (*ἡ ἐκ τῆς δοκιμῆς*) of your brotherly love, in this distribution of your charity through our hands, they who hear of it, and especially they who receive the benefit of it, adore and bless his holy name, for that unfeigned submission and obedience to the authority of Christ in his gospel, which in this, as in other instances, ye practically, as well as verbally, make an honourable profession of, in your affectionate regard to his poor members, according to his will and command ; as also for your great generosity in liberal communications to them, and even to all that need your help, according to your ability, as opportunities and occasions offer.

14 And it abounds to your own advantage, as well as to the glory of God, through their earnest prayers to him, that every blessing may be returned into your own bosoms for the Christian kindness, which ye shew to them, who are affectionately desirous of your happiness for time and eternity, and of having a personal acquaintance with you, because of the superabundant grace of God, which is found in you, and has manifested itself in the fruit of it toward them.

15 My heart sincerely joins in their praises, as well as prayers : Blessed be God for this free and bountiful alms, which turns so inexpressibly to his glory, and to your own and others good : and for the unutterable gift of his grace, in that he has made you both willing and able to honour him with your substance, and to refresh the bowels of his poor, and has filled them with so much gratitude to him and you, in their thankful acknowledgements of it ; and above all, blessed be God for Jesus Christ, to whose gospel ye have shewn such an intire subjection, (*ver. 13.*) through whom the a-

bundant:

bundant riches of this grace, and all blessings come to you; (*chap. viii. 9.*) and who is, by way of eminence, *the gift of God*, (see the note on *John iv. 10.*) even such a transcendent and all comprehensive gift, as exceeds the power of language to express.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What an amiable and exemplary temper is it to be so forward for acts of charity, as not to need excitations to them! And yet there may be occasion for the most liberal soul to be reminded of them, and directed about them, that they may be performed in a due manner, according to his ability, and in proper season. How unreasonable, as well as sinful, are all the cavils of unbelief, and all grudgings of mind, against a well advised charity in such proportions, as, upon serious consideration, we purpose in our own hearts to go into! For God, who loves a cheerful giver, is able to make all grace abound towards us, and to multiply our store, that we may have a sufficiency for ourselves and ours, and may be enriched in every thing, that is requisite to dispose and enable us for every work of benevolence, which he calls us to; and he has assured us, that, according to our sowing, we shall reap, either sparingly, or bountifully: We may therefore depend upon it, that he who disperses abroad, and gives to the poor, from a principle of love to God and them, shall be no loser by it: This sort of righteousness shall abide in its happy fruits to others, and in its everlasting benefit, through grace to his own soul, who is thereby recommended to the affection and prayers of his brethren, and particularly of the poor saints, that the blessing of them that were ready to perish may come upon him; and whose praises are in all the churches of Christ. And, O what an eminent glory is brought to God and his gospel, when alms-deeds are performed with a ready mind, in obedience to his commands, and when they engage the thanksgivings of many to him! Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his grace, whereby he enables and inclines some of his people to communicate, and others to be grateful in their acknowledgments of it; and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity for Jesus Christ, that superlative, inestimable gift of his love, through whom this, and every other good thing, pertaining to life and godliness, is freely bestowed upon us, beyond all expression, measure, or bounds.

### C H A P. X.

*The apostle returning to a necessary vindication of himself, and confutation of the invidious suggestions of false teachers that set themselves against him, asserts his authority with great meekness and humility, 1,—6. Reasons with the Corinthians about it, 7,—11. Rejects the vaunting methods of those teachers in recommending themselves, and claiming the honour of other men's labours; and lays down the better rule, by which he proceeded in his ministrations, with an aim at the glory of God, and at being approved of him, 12,—18.*

#### TEXT.

NOW I Paul myself beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you

#### PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to return to my necessary self-defence against the mean insinuations of your false apostles to degrade me, I, that same Paul, who am reviled by them (*ver. 10.*) as an abject, pusillanimous creature, of low stature, and despicable aspect, in my appearance among you, but as very assuming, magisterial, and severe in

you, but being absent am bold toward you.

my writings, when absent from you; even I, to shew how little I am discomposed at these invidious representations of me, exhort you (*παρηκαλυψας*) with all lenity, calmness, and benevolence of temper, to regard my admonitions; and this I do with so much clemency and tenderness, according to, and as influenced by, the amiable example of my great Lord and Master, who was meek and lowly in heart, (*Matth. xi. 29.*) whom I would fain have you also imitate herein, together with myself.

2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present, with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against some which think of us, as if we walked according to the flesh.

2 But though mine enemies take occasion from my mild and humble behaviour, when I was with you, to speak contemptuously of me, I earnestly intreat, (*δεομαι*) as well as exhort you, that you would not side with them and thereby force me, contrary to my own inclination to exercise my apostolick authority, when I come to you again with such severity as, unless things be mended, I purpose, and think it my duty to use, without fear of any man's face, for the correcting of those among you who judge and talk \* of me particularly, together with others of my brethren, as if I were influenced by secular views of interest, or honour, and conducted my ministry by maxims of carnal reason; than which no reflection can be more unjust.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh,

3 For though indeed I, as well as the rest of my fellow-labourers, do dwell in mortal flesh, and we all are liable to the common infirmities and calamities, that attend our being in the body, while we preach the gospel; (*Gal. iv. 13.*) yet I can appeal to God who knows my heart; (*chap. ii. 17.*) and the manner of my life and labours plainly shews, that the exercise of my ministry, in which I am called to war a good warfare, (*1 Tim. i. 18.*) and that my conversation in the world, and especially to you-ward, (*chap. i. 12.*) is not with fleshly wisdom, under the government of selfish and sinful principles, by carnal means, to carnal ends; but with simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God.

4 (For the weapons of our warfare

4 For as, like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we are lifted into his service, which may be called a warfare, on

#### N O T E.

\* Though the apostle here, and mostly throughout this chapter, as it has been observed he likewise doth in various other parts of the epistle, (see the notes on *chap. iii. 1.* and *v. 16.*) speaks in the plural number, for the sake of modesty and decency, in treating the subject that lay before him; yet he principally means himself; and, in several parts of the following discourse, it is evident that

he points at things, which only related to himself; I have therefore in the paraphrase on this chapter, as also elsewhere, all along either included others with him, or not, according as I apprehend may be most suitable to the nature of the things he is speaking of, as either common to him and others, or as peculiar to himself.

are not carnal, but mighty, through God to the pulling down of strong holds:)

on account of the difficulties, hardships, and dangers that belong to it, (2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.) and the many great and formidable enemies, that are to be opposed and vanquished; the arms, with which we militate, are not of a worldly nature, to carry things by external force; nor are they such as the wisdom of the flesh furnishes out or as are suited to promote the interests of the flesh, but in opposition to these they are of a spiritual nature \*, such as *the gospel of peace and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, (Eph. vi. 15, 17.) as dispensed with light, zeal, and courage, in their native simplicity, without human art or eloquence, (chap iv. 2, 7. and 1 Cor. i. 23. 23. and ii. 1—7.) and in opposition to the *weakness* of carnal means, they are wonderfully prevalent, through the mighty operation of God with, and by them to demolish the strongest sorts of sin Satan, and the world, and all the darkness, rebellion, pride, and prejudices, unbelief, stubbornness, sensuality, and enmity, which lie in the heart of man, and fortify themselves in it, as in a strong hold, against God and all this is done, as easily and effectually by these weapons, as the walls of *Jericho* were thrown down with the blowing of rams horns. (Josb. vi. 4—20)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

5 These means, used in this spiritual warfare, are successful, not by human might or power, but by the spirit of the Lord, (Zech. iv. 6, 7.) to confute and overthrow the corrupt reasonings (*λογισμοί*) of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and every proud conceit of self-wisdom, righteousness, and strength, together with all the power and policy of hell and earth, that naturally rise up in rebellion against, and would hinder the propagation of the light, grace, and holiness of the gospel, and the various discoveries, that are made of the perfections of the divine nature, and of the mind and will of God therein; And he renders these means effectual to subdue every opposing thought and passion; to captivate and overcome them by a sweet, and yet all conquering energy; and to reduce them to a cheerful and obediential subjection to the authority and commands of the Lord Christ, that he may have a willing people in the day of his power. (Psal. cx. 3.)

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your

6 And as to those among you, who, after all proper methods have been used to reclaim them, continue obstinate and refractory, and do what in them lies to degrade me and my office, I am furnished with powers, and am ready to inflict such exemplary punishments upon

#### N O T E.

\* Though *faith*, and *prayer*, and other graces and *accoutrements*, are also reckoned to the *Christian's armour*; (Eph. vi. 13.—18.)

yet the *gospel of peace*, and the *whole word of God*, seem to be chiefly intended here, as the means of pulling down strong holds. &c.

your obedience is fulfilled.

pon them, by my apostolick rod, as they deserve \* : Only I am willing to defer this, till the utmost has been tried by gentler treatment, and it may be seen how many of you shall pay obedience to Christ, and to his authority in me ; and how far ye shall fulfil the orders, which I have given you, by the Lord Jesus, to cast incorrigible offenders out of the church.

7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? if any man trust to himself, that he is Christ; let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ, even so are we Christ.

7 How disadvantageously soever my inveterate opposers may pretend to judge of me, from the meanness of my corporal presence, the lowness of my worldly circumstances, and the homility and mildness of my behaviour, when among you ; are ye so weak and inconsiderate, as to form your judgment and esteem of me and them, merely from external show and appearances? If there be any one †, even the most leading man of the faction that has been raised among you who vaunts and pretends to be confident in his own mind, and like a self-righteous person, trusts in himself, that he is a member and servant of Christ, united to him, guided by his Spirit, and commissioned and owned by him, let such an one, however, reckon again with himself, and reflect often and seriously upon it, to make him humble and prevent his contemptuous thoughts of me, that admitting he were what he pretends to, I am every way as much Christ's and am honoured with as many evident tokens of it, as he possibly can be.

8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, (which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not

8 For if being forced to it on this occasion for vindicating my own publick character, I should speak with something of an air of boasting, beyond what I ever have done, or like and choose, or otherwise would do, or beyond what the vainest of *them* can reasonably presume to do, concerning the apostolic powers, which the Lord Jesus has entrusted me with, for building you up in the faith, holiness, and order of the gospel, and not for the destruction of any of your souls; and for bringing offenders among you to repentance, and not for driving them into despair, no, not by the severest exercise

#### N O T E S.

\* This *revenging all disobedience*, seems to be something different from the *weapons of warfare* before-mentioned, *ver.* 4. and to relate to what he would do by the apostolic rod, rather than merely by a church-censure, which he had directed the church itself to pass upon obstinate offenders, *1 Cor.* v. 3.—13. and which he here intimates he would vindicate and confirm, in case of continued impenitence, by inflicting further punishments upon them; (see the note on *1 Cor.* iv. 21.) though, doubtless, had he been present, he would have presided in their church assem-

blies, and passed the censure with their concurrence, by virtue of his apostolic authority, which gave him the power of an universal pastor.

† Mr *Locke* thinks that one particular man is here, and in some following verses, pointed at, as the false apostle, who had raised a faction among the *Corinthians* against the apostle *Paul*. But it seems pretty evident from *ver.* 2, 10, 12. that there were more than one false teacher, or apostle, that opposed him; tho' perhaps one might be more leading and famous than the rest.

not for your destruction,) I should not be ashamed :

9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For his letters (say they) are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

11 Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters, when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing

ercise of my authority: Yet, were I to enlarge upon this head, more than I shall, I should have no reason to be ashamed of it, as if it were groundless, untimely, or indecent, in my present situation; the truth would bear me out, and none could confute me.

9 But I forbear saying so much of this especially of my power to inflict punishments, as I justly might that I may not seem to conduct, as though I intended to frighten you, by writing in my epistles; while absent from you, what I dare not do, when present with you, as is objected against me by my antagonists.

10 For they don't stick to say, in a reviling manner concerning me, his epistles indeed are wrote in a high, solemn, authoritative and threatening strain, as if he were *some body*; but when he is personally present with us, he appears to be a poor, weak, contemptible animal, of a spirit as low as his stature; and his discourse is quite despicable, without eloquence, or graceful utterance, or any thing to support the vast authority he pretends to in his writings. (See the note on chap. xi. 6.)

11 But whoever speaks of me at this detracting rate, let such an one reckon, and depend upon it, that whatever I threaten in words by writing, when I am not with you, I will certainly execute in fact, as far as there may be occasion for it, whenever I have the opportunity, as I design, God willing, (chap. xiii. 1.) of coming to you again; I then will not spare to punish such, as shall continue disobedient, (ver. 6.) according to the authority which Christ has given me.

12 This is all that I, at present, shall say of that matter: For, surely, such a contemptible wretch, as I am represented to be, must not presume to think myself fit to vie, or to be ranked and joined, with that party among you, who speak great swelling words of vanity; nor to compare myself with such mighty boasters, as fancy that none can come up, near to them \* : Nor indeed would my conscience allow me to be so conceited and vain-glorious, as to vaunt beyond all bounds, like them or to go into an ostentatious detail, and *that* beyond *the truth*, of all my qualifications, powers, and performances, in order to my comparing them with theirs, who excessively magnify their own pretended gifts and achievements, to the running down o-

thers

#### N O T E.

\* As some valuable expositors take the former part of this verse in the *ironical*, and others in the *serious* view, I have considered it both ways, that the reader may take his choice.

paring themselves amongst themselves, are not wise.

thers, that are every way better and greater men than themselves: But this I must say, that while in forming their fond opinion and esteem of themselves, they take their measure, rule, and standard, only from such imaginary excellencies and services, as they fancy belong to themselves; and while, instead of being duly humbled, in consideration of the much superior character and usefulness of others, they compare themselves; only with persons of their own temper and party; and of inferior, or at least of equally insignificant endowments they act a very weak and foolish part, and can never in that way come at a true knowledge of themselves, nor do they indeed understand the proper boundaries of their own sphere and province, so as not to thrust themselves upon churches, and lord it over them, which were founded by the ministry of others, and not of themselves.

13 But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to each even unto you.

13 But, for my own part, I will not attempt, like them, to assume to myself the honour of other men's labours, (*ver. 15.*) nor to glory in things, that God has not commissioned me for, and wrought by me, within those bounds, which his providence has plainly marked out to me \*: But I shall only speak of those things, that have been done in a regular exercise of my ministry, not by skipping about from place to place, according to my owned humour, and for serving party-views, as the false apostles do; but according to the measure and limits of that commission and call, which God has given me, and assisted and owned me in, for preaching the gospel in many regions, through which I travelled, in an orderly course, for that purpose, (*Rom. xv. 18, 19.*) till, by the favour of God, and according to the rule of my commission, I came as far as *Corinth*, even to you; where, as in various other places, I planted the gospel, and a church-state among you. (*1 Cor. iii. 6, 10.*)

14 For we stretch not ourselves

14 For I am not chargeable, as your new preachers are

#### N O T E.

\* It may very much help us to understand this and the following verses, if, with Dr Hammond, and some other critics, we consider the terms, that are mostly used in them, as *agonistical*. In this view of them, the measure of the rule (*το μετρον το κανονος*) alludes to the path marked out, and bounded by a white line for racers in the *Isthmian* games, that were observed among the *Corinthians*; and so the apostle represents his work in preaching the gospel, as his spiritual race; and the province, to which he was appointed, as the compass or stage of ground, which God had distributed or measured out (*μετρον ετα*) for him to run in. Accordingly, to boast without his measure (*υπερ μετρον*) in

the former part of this verse, and *ver. 15.* and to stretch himself beyond his measure, or over extend himself, *ver. 14.* (*υπερ εκτεινεται*) refer to one that ran beyond, or out of his line: We are come as far as to you (*αχρι ους ιερουσαλημ*) *ver. 14.* alludes to him that came foremost to the goal; and in another man's line, *ver. 16.* (*εν αλλοτρω κανονι*) signifies in the province, that was marked out for some body else, in allusion to the line, by which the race was bounded; each of the racers having the path, which he ought to run, chalked out to him; and if one stepped over into the other's path, he extended himself over his line.



selves beyond our measure, as tho' we reached not unto you; for we are come as far as to you also, in preaching the gospel of Christ:

15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours: but having hope when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly.

16 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line, or things made ready to our hand.

17 But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

are, with extending my course beyond its appointed bounds, as if, without proceeding gradually, I had passed by other towns and cities that lay in my way, or had not come to you, till after ye had received the gospel by some other hand: For I took all other places, far and near, that were within the compass of my travels; and when I had fulfilled the necessary parts of my ministry in them severally, I advanced forward, till, at length, I reached as far as *Corinth* also, where I was the first that preached the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ to you; and, blessed be God, it was attended with great success. (*Acts* xviii. 1,—11.)

15 I do not herein vaunt of things that I have done, without observing the bounds, which God has marked out to me, as your new teachers do; nor do I, like them, pretend, as though Christ had wrote those things by me, which were done by others; and so take the credit of their labours to myself: No, I have always *striven to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named before, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:* (*Rom.* xv. 18, 20.) And (*de*) I hope in the Lord, that when your faith, which has been shaken by false apostles, is re-established, regulated, and improved, I shall be greatly encouraged, and assisted by you, to extend my province still farther, than the goal which has hitherto been set me; and *that* without going over another man's line, but according to the commission, which the Lord has given me, as the apostle of the *Gentiles*.

16 My hope is that, by your means, I shall be enabled to hold on my course, so as to carry the gospel of Christ to distant countries, that lie beyond you, for the conversion of many there, where it has not yet been preached; and so shall continue to glory in what further service my great Master shall mark out for me, and do by me, more than has yet been allotted to me, and *that* without leaping over my own bounds, and encroaching upon another minister's province, or bragging of things done by any, that have gone there before me, as if I would take the honour of their labours to myself.

17 But, after all, instead of glorying in ourselves, or in our own accomplishments, labours, and success; and, much more, instead of boasting of what has been done by others, as though it had been performed by ourselves: let every one, that is minded to exult and triumph, glory only in the Lord Jesus, by whose grace he is what he is, and doth what he doth, for the hon-

nour of God, and the good of others, that he alone may be exalted.

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

18 For whoever he be that, having a high conceit of his own abilities and performances, and of the good done thereby, ascribes them to himself, and seeks the applause of men, is far from being accepted of that God, who *resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*: (1 Pet. v. 5.) But he, whom the Lord honours with his gifts and graces, presence and blessing, and bears witness to, as sincere, humble, and faithful in his work, is highly approved in his sight; and shall have praise of God, when he shall make manifest the counsels of the heart. (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what meekness and condescension, in imitation of our blessed Lord, should his servants labour to win over such, as are unreasonably prejudiced against them and their ministrations; and yet with what authority should they vindicate the honour of Christ, in rebuking those that, after all, continue obstinate in their disobedience to him, as speaking by them! Though faithful ministers are men of like passions and infirmities with others, and make but a mean figure in the world, while they dwell in mortal flesh; yet they are not to be judged of by outward appearance; nor are they governed by carnal principles and views in their work and warfare, as many false pretenders are. And O how victorious and triumphant is the gospel, which they preach, when attended with the mighty power of God, to beat down the strong holds of sin and Satan; to overcome the perverse reasonings of carnal minds, and all their pride and prejudices; and to subdue them to the obedience of Christ! When his ministering servants have a witness in themselves that they are Christ's, it is sometimes necessary for them to assert it, in confutation of those, that would unrighteously reproach them, as though they assumed too much to themselves, or acted an inconsistent part in different situations: And yet how careful should they be, to avoid all appearances of vain boasting, or of going out of their province, to the hindrance and disturbance of other churches! And as ever they would be approved of God in all that they do, they should take heed of priding themselves in any thing, that they are, have, or perform; and glory only in the Lord, as ascribing the praise of all intirely to him.

### C H A P. XI.

*The apostle, in further vindication of his authority against his enemies, gives the reasons, in a prefatory apology, of his speaking in his own commendation, 1,—4. Shews that he had not come short of any of the apostles of Christ, much less of the false apostles (whom he describes) in freely preaching the gospel, 5,—15. Makes another apology for what he was going to add in defence of his own character, 16,—21. And draws out an account at large of his external privileges, as equal to those of the false apostles; and of his qualifications, labours, cares, sympathy, sufferings, dangers, and deliverances, as superior to theirs, 22,—33.*

## TEXT.

WOULD to God  
you could  
bear with me a  
little in my folly;  
and indeed bear  
with me.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS it may be necessary to add something further, in vindication of my apostolic office, against those, that would supplant it, I wish (*οψαλσε*) ye would have a little patience with me in what I am forced to say on my own behalf, which may seem to be very vain and foolish, as speaking in one's own praise is generally thought to be, and as, without the greatest necessity, it certainly would be; But (*αλλα*) I beseech you to bear with me, as ye ought, in this my reputed folly, in which I principally aim at your advantage.

2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

2 For I am affectionately and solicitously concerned for you, with a holy and religious doubt and fear, lest any of you should be drawn off from Christ and his gospel, and from me, as his apostle, to your false teachers; and there is good reason why I should be touchingly thoughtful about you: For I, as an earnest suitor for the Lord Jesus, was the means of bringing you to know and love him, to accept of him, and yield yourselves up with full consent to him, as your only husband, like persons betrothed, as *Israel* were of old, in a marriage-covenant to the Lord; (*Hof. ii. 19, 20.*) and it is my great ambition as it always has been, that I may have the honour and pleasure of putting you into his hands, as a pure, uncorrupted, faithful spouse, that is for him, and for no other. (*Hof. iii. 3.*)

3 But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve thro' his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

3 But considering the artifices and intrigues of the false apostles, who are so very busy with you, I am tenderly in pain for you, lest as the Devil, by his cunning stratagems under the form of a Serpent, imposed upon, over-reached, and drew our mother *Eve*, thro' her unwatchfulness, into sin; (*Gen. iii. 1,—6.*) so some of your souls, through the sophistical insinuations, and plausible pretences of his instruments, should be inadvertently perverted in your principles, temper, and practice; and be turned aside from the purity of doctrine, relating to salvation alone by Jesus Christ, and from the sincerity and uprightness in manners that belong to the professors of his name, and are really sound in all those, that are vitally united to him.

4 For if he that cometh, preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached; or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have

4 I am afraid, I say, lest by their means, instead of your being like a chaste virgin to Christ, ye should be corrupted, like an adulteress: For if any one, who has come among you since I left you, proposes another Saviour from sin and from the wrath to come, than that Jesus, whom I, at well as *Apollos*, preached to you; (*1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 10, 11.*) or if, by the ministry of any new upstart, ye have been made partakers of another and

better

have not received, or another gospel which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

better spirit, and of more excellent gifts and graces, than ye received by the hearing of faith; (*Gal. iii. 2.*) or if, by means of such an intruder, ye have been made acquainted with a more holy, joyful and blessed gospel, that is more worthy of God, and contains better tidings, or a safer way of salvation, than what ye embraced through my preaching; then indeed ye might very well receive and own him, and submit to his authority, and even prefer him to me; and none could blame you for it.

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

5 But this, none of you can say; and were any to pretend to preach another Saviour, another Spirit, or another gospel, they ought to be rejected with abhorrence: (*Gal. i. 6,—9.*) for I am persuaded, and it is no presumption in me to conclude, that, as to these things, I no way fall short of any, even of the most eminent apostles of Christ; no, not of *Peter* himself, whom some of you make your boast of; (*1 Cor. i. 12.*) much less have I been inferior to any of the false apostles; no, not to the most famous of them, that has of late crept in among you; and to ingratiate himself with the *Jewish* party, may pretend to have come from *Peter*.

6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

6 Yea, though my style be plain and simple, like that of a private ordinary person (*ὁ τοιοῦτος*) without the flourishes of human rhetoric; (*1 Cor. ii. 1, 4.*) \* and tho' my pronunciation be not so graceful and fluent, as some others, and particularly as my brother *Apollos's* may be; (*Acts xviii. 24.*) yet my knowledge of Christ, and of the whole scheme of the gospel, which I received by revelation from him, (*Gal. i. 12.*) is inferior to none: But this I have shewn and proved in so ample a manner, with regard to all the main points of Christian faith, and obedience, the efficacy of which ye experienced with such power of the holy Ghost, when I was with you, that I need only appeal to your own consciences for the truth of it.

7 Have I committed an offence in abusing myself that

7 As to another cavil of my adversaries, (see the note on *1 Cor. ix. 1.*) as though I had acted below the apostolic character, and inconsistent with it, in not demanding a maintenance from you, as I justly might, (*1 Cor.*

#### N O T E.

\* No good judges of true oratory, that have carefully read and considered the apostle *Paul's* speeches and epistles, can think him a stranger to the art of persuasion, or the rules of rhetoric: *Vid. Bez. in loc.* and see *Mr Locke's preface to the epistles; and Blackwall's sacred clausulae*, vol. i. pag. 254, etc.) But he purposely avoided the pomp of *Greek* eloquence, and the studied arts of human oratory in his preaching, that our faith might

not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (*1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.*) And therefore his being *rude in speech*, is referred by some to a defect in his voice, which they suppose was small and shrill, if not stammering; and by others, to that plain unartificial way of speaking which he chose, but for which the wise and learned men of this world despised him.

that you might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

(1 Cor. ix. 4,—14.) but working with my own hands for a subsistence; (*Acts* xviii. 3, and 1 Cor. iv. 12.) can any one really think that I have been guilty of any fault, or done you any injury, in humbling myself so far, and submitting to so mean and servile a way of getting my bread; my design in which was, that none of you might be prejudiced against me, as a mercenary creature; but that ye might the more readily embrace the gospel of the grace of God, and might be enriched with its great and glorious blessings, without impairing your temporal substance? Was I not, by preaching it at free cost, the more likely to promote your spiritual prosperity, and lift you up; as it were, to heaven in it's glorious privileges? (*Matth.* xi. 23.)

8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.

8 Yea, in pursuit of my studious concern for your spiritual advantage, I have also, in tenderness to you, stripped other churches \* that have been captivated to the obedience of Christ by my ministry, (*chap.* x. 5.) even though they were poorer than yourselves, (*chap.* xviii. 2.) by taking larger contributions from them, than were barely necessary for my maintainance, during my abode with them, that I might minister the gospel for your conversion and edification, at their cost, without making it chargeable to you.

9 And, when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself

9 Accordingly, whilst I continued preaching the glad tidings of salvation among you, and wanted the necessities and conveniences of life, ye very well know, that I did not load you with the expence of supporting me, and so become burdensome; (*chap.* xii. 13.) (*καταναγκάζων*) nor did I stun any of you with complaints, or grow dull and slothful in preaching the gospel, for want of pay: For whatever I stood in need of, over and above what I could earn by working sometimes at a handicraft trade, (*Acts* xviii. 3.) my Christian brethren, that came from the churches in Macedonia, and particularly some, that arrived from *Philippi*, one of it's chief cities, (see the note on *Acts* xvi.) furnished me with it, (*Phil.* iv. 15.) and, at all events, I have, from first

#### N O T E.

\* The word (*εὐανγεῖον*) signifies to *spoil*, *strip*, or *make naked*, as well as to *rob*; and it is certain that the apostle did not mean it in the bad sense of *robbery*: For this would have been a very odd vindication of himself against his captious adversaries; and he calls what he received from other churches *wages* (*μισθόν*) alluding to the virtuals that were anciently given to soldiers for their pay, which intimates that he thought himself to have as good a right to the contributions of those churches, as soldiers had to their stipend; he

being a *good soldier* of *Jesus Christ*, and having a just claim to be honourably supported by every church, to which he was an apostle, in such a manner, as might be best suited to promote his serving the common cause of his, and their great Lord and Master. And as the words rendered, *I robbed, taking wages*, (*εὐανγεῖον λαβὼν μισθόν*) are *military* terms, perhaps, there may be some allusion to the *spoils*, that are taken from captives, and applied to further use in carrying on wars and victories, which is suggested at in the paraphrase

self from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that, wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers

first to last, taken effectual care, by one means or other, to procure a livelihood hitherto, without your assistance, that I might not be chargeable to any of you: And I am, for good reasons, fully resolved never to be so, for time to come. *chap. xii. 14.*)

10 If this be imputed to me, as a fault, I am so far from being ashamed of it, that I count it a great part of my honour; and I solemnly declare, with the faith and honesty of a Christian, and of an apostle of Christ to which he is witness, (*Rom. ix. 1.*) that no one whatsoever, either by reproaches on one hand, or by kindnesses on the other, shall prevent my glorying in my not being a burden to you, or to any of the churches in all your province of *Achaia*.

11 Why think ye, am I so solicitously bent upon this? is it, as some would suggest, because I have not a real and hearty affection for you, but have taken some disgust at you, and therefore will not seem to be any way beholden to you? (See the note on *Chap. xii. 13.*) far from it; the great God, who searches the heart, knows that it doth not proceed from any such cause as this.

12 But what I have done in preaching the gospel gratis to you, (*xxi. xxi. xxi.*) and will persist in, is, that I may stop the mouths of those false teachers, who are continually seeking all occasions to depreciate me, and extol themselves; and that in the very thing which they boast of as though they were disinterested persons, and only insist upon your maintaining them, as a testimony of your owning their authority over you\*, they may be induced, by my example, to be as little oppressive to you, and as free from all mercenary views, as I am; and that they may not catch at an advantage for boasting, (as they gladly would, were I to take any thing of you) as if they therein did nothing, but what even I myself had done.

13 For, whatever this sort of men pretend to, they are not real apostles of Christ, sent and commissioned by him; but they are false claimants of that high character

#### N O T E.

\* The sense given the first part of the paraphrase on this clause is, I own, very singular; but all other interpretations, that I have met with, except Mr. Locke's, which I have added, mostly go on a supposition, that some, at least, of these false teachers did preach at free cost, which seems rather to perplex, than clear the apostle's meaning, and to spoil the connection between this and the following verse, as well as to be utterly inconsistent with the whole scope of his ar-

gument, answerable to what he had insisted on, at large, in the *ninth* chapter of his first epistle, (see the note there on *ver. 1.*) which is to vindicate himself against the calumnies of the false apostles, on account of his not claiming and using the right of *maintenance*: And it appears from the 20th verse of this chapter, that they were so far from taking *nothing* for their labours among the *Corinthians*, that they were very *rigorous* and *oppressive* in their *exactions* upon them.

ers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

rafter; they corrupt the word of God and handle it deceitfully, (*chap. ii. 17, and iv. 2.*) labouring to cheat and impose upon you and to serve themselves, under pretence of serving our Lord Jesus Christ; (*Rom. xvi. 18.*) and, to compass this design, they put on the most specious forms, that they may appear like the true apostles of Christ, as if they had the same authority, and did the same work with them.

14 And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

14 And it is no wonder that they should practise this deceitful art, since Satan himself, on certain occasions takes upon him the guise of a good angel, pretending the greatest sanctity and kindness in order to his doing the greatest mischief, as when tempting *Eve* to sin, (*ver. 3.*) he assumed the body of a serpent in such a beautiful form, and accosted her with such fair speeches (*Gen. iii. 1—6.*) as made that prince of darkness appear to her like one of the glorious angels that dwelt in the light of God's immediate presence, and came with a message of truth and goodness from him.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness: whose end shall be according to their works.

15 It is therefore no strange, new or impracticable thing if his emissaries and servants, who learn of him and are influenced by him, to promote his kingdom, should also dissemble their own true character, and put on the face of holy ministers, and teachers of the way of righteousness to eternal life by the works of the law and not alone through the faith of Christ: But for all this God will bring them to judgment, when their final reward shall be according to the wickedness and hypocrisy of their doings; and so their end will be destruction. (*Phil. iii. 18, 19.*)

16 I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

16 Considering then how these false pretenders set themselves off, to the deceiving of many, I again (*ver. 1.*) beg that ye would bear with me, and that none of you would count me a vain glorious fool in representing the great things which God has really done for, and by me: But if any of you think me to act such a foolish part herein, as don't become a wise and prudent man; yet I beseech you to indulge me, as far as ye would one, whom ye take to be a weak and silly creature that I as well as others, but with much better views, may a little further vent myself in what looks like boasting of my own endowments and performances.

17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were

17 I confess, that in so much insisting on my own character, I do not speak in such a way, as seems worthy of Christ, and after his example, (*John viii. 50, 54.*) nor do I speak according to any express command, that he delivered in his personal ministry. (See the note on *1 Cor. vii. 10.*) No; I must own, that he condemned seeking

were foolishly in this conduct of boasting.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

20 For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.

seeking honour one of another, (*John v. 44.*) which is certainly very criminal, when self applause is aimed at: But the huge boastings of my enemies with a design of imposing upon, and preventing you; and their mean insinuations to disparage my apostleship and the pure gospel of Christ, and so to prevent my usefulness in preaching it, force me to speak with an air of weakness and folly, in this ostentatious appearance of setting forth things, that relate to my office, after their example, who confidently boast of themselves.

18 Since many of your judaizing teachers greatly value themselves upon, and pride themselves in, their external privileges and advantages, such as their being the seed of *Abraham*, (*ver. 22.*) and circumcised in the flesh, and the like; I will venture to say, that, if there is any room for glorying in these things, I can boast of them as much as they; and surely ye cannot be offended at me for saying this.

19 For those of you that admire the false apostles, can easily bear with their folly, while they ingratiate themselves with you by magnifying these their privileges; and if, to shew that I am upon a level with them in this respect, I also do the same, ye may likewise bear with me therein, since ye think yourselves very wise in bearing with them\*; and are indeed so wonderfully conceited of your own understanding, as to pity, rather than envy others, whom ye look upon as fools, compared with yourselves: Nay, ye can bear with much greater faults in your false teachers, than this.

20 For if any one of them tyrannizes over your persons and consciences, as though ye were absolute slaves†; if he makes a prey of you, as *serving his own belly*, (*Rom xvi. 18.*) like the *Scribes*, who under pretence of religion, *devour widows houses*; (*Luke xx. 47.*) if he not only receives large presents and salaries, but even takes away your worldly substance by subtilty and fraud; if he aggrandizes and speaks highly of himself, and treats you with sovereign contempt, as the *Jews* were wont to do by the *Gentiles*: Nay, if he insults and abuses you in as ignominious a manner as when a man gives ano-

their

#### N O T E.

\* *Seeing ye are wise* is spoken ironically, in a beautiful opposition to their counting the apostle a fool in glorying, as though he should say, well, be it so, that I am deemed a fool; yet ye, who have such a vast opinion of your own knowledge, are surely wise enough to bear with me, while ye consider me under that character.

† *Bringing them into bondage* is, if I mistake not, to be taken, not as some expositors

understand it, of subjecting them to the law of *Moses*: for though the apostle was afraid, lest, in some, this might be the case, *ver. 3.* yet it does not appear that it as yet was so; whereas the bondage here spoken of, is supposed to be what they had been already brought into; and the other sense is not so much of a piece with all that follows in this verse, as that which is given in the paraphrase. See Mr *Lect's* note.



ther a slap on the face; ye can put up all this, and be easy under it.

21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

21 What I mean, and speak of relates to the indignity, (*ατιμία*) which these insolent men have used you with; and which, at the same time, they have put upon me, as though I were a contemptible wretch, that had no right to, nor were able to support, the apostolick powers and privileges, which I profess to claim: But, let them paint me out in as invidious and despicable colours, as they please, whatever any of them can pretend to boast of and value themselves upon, I also (though it may seem to be foolish) can talk at as high a rate as they; and boldly compare myself with them, in every thing that is worth mentioning, in their account, or yours.

22 Are they Hebrews? so am I: are they Israelites? so am I: Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

22 As to *external* privileges according to the flesh, (*ver.* 18.) are they of *Jewish* extract by birth, in distinction from proselytes of other nations? and are they such as use the *Hebrew* tongue in their synagogue worship in distinction from *Hellenistic Jews*, (see the note on *John* xii. 20.) that perform it in *Greek*? I likewise am so, both by father and mother's side, and have always used the same language, being a *Hebrew* of the *Hebrew's*. (*Phil.* iii. 5.) Are they descended, not from *Esau*, but from the beloved *Jacob*, (*Mal.* i. 2.) who was honoured with the title of *Israel*, in token of the power, which, as a prince, he had with God? (*Gen.* xxxii. 28.) I also am an *Israelite*, of the tribe that sprung from his beloved *Benjamin*, (*Phil.* iii. 5.) which is no mean tribe. Are they the natural off-spring of the famous *Abraham*, that friend of God, (*2 Chron.* xx. 7.) to whom he promised, to be a God, and to his seed after him in their generations? (*Gen.* xviii. 7, 9.) I also am of the seed of *Abraham*; (*Rom.* xi. 1.) and so I have as much room, at least to boast of all these privileges, as any of themselves. (*Phil.* iii. 4, 5.)

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more

23 And as to things of still *far greater worth and importance*, relating to the gospel state, do they boast that they are ministers, who preach Christ, and are commissioned and owned by him? Admitting that this were true, though there is plain evidence to the contrary, I (to speak once more with an appearance of folly) am really the servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to a superior degree, in my extraordinary commission and qualifications, and in preaching his uncorrupted gospel: In testimony of this, I shall at present only appeal to what God has called, and enabled me, more than any of them to do and suffer in the cause of Christ I have been more frequent and abundant in toils and fatigues and more extensive

more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

tensive and indefatigable in ministerial labours, than any of them: And over and above all that they, especially those who plead for circumcision to avoid being persecuted, (*Gal.* v. 11, and vi. 12.) can pretend to have suffered for Christ, I have bore innumerable more stripes than any of them for his sake, and for professing and preaching his pure gospel: I have been oftner clapt up in jails, than they have been: And I have very frequently been in imminent danger of death for asserting the cause of my great Lord; as to instance in a few particulars.

24 I have gone under the lash at five different times by the *Jews*, who have still power, under the permission of the *Roman* governor to inflict corporal punishments, though not unto death, unless it were under the inspection and presidency of the *Roman* governor\*; in all which scourgings I received thirteen strokes with a whip of three thongs, which, in all, made thirty-nine stripes, the law of *Moses* obliging them not to exceed forty, in punishing offenders†. (*Deut.* xxv. 3.)

25 At three different times‡, one of which was at *Philippi*, (*Acts* xvi. 23.) I have been whipped with *Roman* Officers: (See the note *Acts* xxii. 25.) Once I was stoned by the mob at *Lystra*, through the instigation of the *Jews*, till I was thought to be dead, (*Acts* xiv. 19.) though, just before, the people of that City could scarce be restrained from adoring me, as a God: (*ver.* 11—13.) Thrice have I been cast away by shipwrecks§; in one of which I was tossed about by the waves of the sea, in the utmost danger, upon a part of the wreck, for a whole night and day together, before I could get ashore.

#### N O T E S.

\* See the notes on *Acts* vi. 12, and xxv. 9. from whence it may appear that the reason, why the apostle *Paul* did not plead his privilege, as a *Roman*, when he was scourged by the *Jews*, as he did when the magistrates at *Philippi*, and *Lyfias* the chief captain at *Jerusalem*, ordered him to be scourged, *Acts* xvi. 22, 37. and xxii. 24, 25. was, because he professed a subjection to the political laws of the *Jews*; and the *Romans* allowed them the use of their own laws.

† *Josephus*, giving an account of this punishment, says, it was with forty stripes, save one. (*Vid. Antiq.* l. iv. c. viii. sec. 21.) But *Calvin*, *Epius*, and others, speak of this as an instance of the *Jews* altering, and taking from the law of God, by their traditions. However, the apostle mentions this number of stripes to shew, that the *Jews* were as severe upon him, as they possibly could be, consistent with their established custom. And that they used to inflict this punishment with a whip of three cords. See

*Hammond* on the place, and *Ainsworth* on *Deut.* xxv. 3.

‡ We have no relation, in the *Acts* of the greatest part of the sufferings, which the apostle recites in these verses, as being forced to it by his enemies. But they are not at all the less to be credited, as real facts: For *Luke's* history is very short, and is principally of facts, which he himself was an eye-witness to; and it cannot be supposed, but that many troubles beset the apostle, which are not recorded in that history; though his modesty concealed them, till he thought himself under a necessity of declaring them.

§ These shipwrecks were all different from that, which we have an account of in *Acts* xxvii: For that was not till after the apostle had wrote this epistle. And the like may be observed of the *Jews* lying in wait for him, *Acts* xx. 5. and of the uprere at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* xxi 27, etc. Neither of those cases, for the same reason, can be included in the perils by his own countrymen, which are referred to *ver.* 16.

16 In journey-  
ing often, in pe-  
rils of waters, in  
perils of robbers,  
in perils by mine  
own countrymen,  
in perils by the  
heathen, in perils  
in the city, in pe-  
rils in the wilder-  
ness, in perils in  
the sea, in perils  
among false bre-  
thren;

27 In wear-  
iness and painful-  
ness, in watchings  
often, in hunger  
and thirst, in  
fastings often, in  
cold and naked-  
ness.

28 Besides those  
things that are  
without, that  
which

26 I have often travelled about, from one country to another, preaching the gospel: (*Rom. xv. 19.*) and in several of those journeys have been in extreme danger, sometimes by floods that were out \*, or by rivers that I have been obliged to pass through: At other times I have been in great danger of falling into the hands of highwaymen, that infest the roads; at others, in danger of being murdered by my own countrymen, the *Jews*; at others, in danger of as bad treatment from the unconverted *Gentiles*; (*Acts xvi. 19—24.*) at others, in danger from outrageous men in one or another city, as particularly at *Ephesus*; (*Acts xix. 29.*) at others, in danger, when travelling through desolate places, of being set upon by ruffians that lay in wait for me, or of being devoured by wild beasts, or of falling down precipices, or into other mischiefs: At other times, I have been in danger of perishing by storms and tempests, or by pirates, in voyages at sea; and at others, in danger of being betrayed, insulted, and mobbed, through the treacherous management of some, who pretended to be Christian converts, but were not so in sincerity and truth; and especially of those false brethren of the *Jewish* sort, that are enemies to the purity and liberty of the gospel (*Gal. ii. 4.*)

27 I have also, in prosecution of my Lord and Master's work, undergone the most fatiguing and painful services by day; and it is no unusual thing for my natural rest and sleep to be broke by night: (*Acts 625, vi. and xx. 11, 31, and 2 Theff. iii. 8.*) at other times, I have been distressed with hunger and thirst, for want of proper and seasonable refreshments; (*chap. vi. 5. and 1 Cor. iv. and 11.*) and, very often, I have not only been forced to fast for a considerable time together, as having nothing to eat, but have likewise voluntarily abstained from usual repasts, with a religious view: And, at other times, have I been exposed to the severities of weather, without sufficient cloathing, to keep me warm or to defend me against it. (*1 Cor. iv. 11.*)

28 Besides all these, with many other sore troubles relating to the *Body*, which I have been exercised with, in my zeal for propagating the gospel of Christ, there are other touching trials of a spiritual nature, that have more immediately affected my *soul*; such as the multiplicity of business, which daily crowds upon me relating

#### N O T E.

\* One or other of these dangers by *waters* in travelling, seems to be referred to, in distinction from those, which the apostle speaks

of, at the close of this verse, are suffered in the *sea*.

which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

relating to all the churches of Christ; and the anxiety, thoughtfulness, and concern of my mind, together with my earnest prayers and endeavours, for their purity, peace, and prosperity, preservation and encrease, and for rectifying what is amiss in them, and helping forward their education and comfort, by sending them suitable assistants; (*chap. viii. 22.*) as also by writing to them, whether I have been personally acquainted with them, or not, (*Col. ii. 1.*) but especially those churches, which have been planted by my ministry. (*Chap. vii. 5, and Acts xv. 36.*)

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?

29 What member of any church of Christ is afflicted in body or mind, or is weak in grace and spiritual attainments, whom I do not tenderly and affectionately sympathize and mourn with, and do all I can to relieve as far as I know the case? Who among them is ever stumbled and in danger of falling from the faith and hope of the gospel, without my heart's burning with grief and godly jealousy for him, and with holy zeal to encourage, fortify and recover him?

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

30 Since mine adversaries constrain me to do something that looks like boasting, I rather choose thus to glory in my sufferings, hardships, persecutions, and reproaches, which are matter of humiliation and affliction to me, but give the fairest opportunity for Christ's strength to be manifested in my weakness, (*chap. xii. 9, 10.*) than in my high privileges, and the great things, which he has done by me.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

31 And as to all the forementioned instances of my sufferings, dangers, and trials for Christ, though they may seem to be incredible, and ye may be intire strangers to many of them, I solemnly appeal to the ever blessed God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose I am, and whom I serve, and who has graciously supported me under them, and carried me through them, that I have not gone one tittle beyond the truth, in the summary account I have given of them.

32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king

32 I shall only further add one well known particular, which befel me toward the beginning of my ministry, and by which ye may easily imagine what a suffering state mine hath been ever since; and that is, When I preached at *Damascus*, the governor of that city, who was set over it by *Aretas*\*, the King of *Arabia*

#### N O T E.

\* *Josephus* speaks of *Aretas* as king of *Arabia Petraea*, and as the father-in-law of *Herod the Tetrarch*, whose daughter he had married, but afterwards put away for *Herodias*, his brother *Philip's* wife, of whom we have

an account in *Mat. xiv. 3.* And this *Aretas* was, at the same time, king of *Syria*, of which *Damascus* was a chief city, governed by a prefect under him. *Vid. Græc. in loc.*

king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me :

33 And thro' a window in a basket, was I set down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

*rabia* and Syria it being under his jurisdiction, was so incensed against me, that he ordered the city gates to be shut up, and strictly guarded with watch and ward, to prevent my flight ; he having resolved, if possible, to seize me and take away my life, at the desire of the Jews, who thirsted after my blood : (*Acts ix. 23, 24.*) But they were defeated in their cruel design.

33 And the Lord, *who knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation*, (2 Pet. ii. 9.) put it into the hearts of my Christian friends to let me down in a basket, from a window of one of the houses, that stood on the city wall ; and so by his wonderful providence, I narrowly escaped the fury of all mine enemies there ; (*Acts ix. 25.*) and, according to our Lord's own direction in cases of persecution, (*Matth. x. 23.*) I flew (*ἐξέρυον*) out of their hands to other places, where I might have opportunity of preaching the gospel : And *having obtained help of God, I continue to this day.* (*Acts xxi. 22.*)

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How solicitous are the servants of Christ, that the people committed to their care may not be deceived, and turned aside from the purity of the gospel, by the subtilty of Satan and his instruments ! And how vain would they present them all, as a chaste virgin to Christ ! For this, when the circumstances of things require, and admit of it, they cheerfully quit their claims to maintenance, and undergo the greatest toils and labours, hardships and dangers : And as God interests himself in their preservation, that they may escape the hands of their enemies, as long as he has any thing for them to do ; so it is their highest ambition to approve themselves to him in all their ministrations, and to be made manifest in the consciences of his people, as such. They seek not the honour of men ; though sometimes, to support their public character and usefulness, against the calumnies of their enemies, they are obliged to speak with such an air of self-commendation, as would otherwise be justly deemed weak and foolish. However, if they must needs make a shew of boasting, they rather chuse that it should be of their self-denials, sufferings, and reproaches, for Christ and the gospel's sake, to keep them humble, than of their gifts and attainments, to feed their pride and vanity. But how different is the temper and management of those false pretenders, that put on specious appearances, as if they were angels of light, or ministers of Christ and of righteousness, while in reality they are vain boasters, and deceitful workers, that make a prey of the people, and exercise a haughty and oppressive dominion over them ! How carefully should all such be guarded against, contemned, and avoided ! But how worthy of high esteem are those that imitate the great apostle in labours and sufferings for Christ, by sea and land ; by night and by day ; in city and country ; by open enemies and false friends ; in sympathy and tenderness toward the weak and afflicted ; in anxiety of mind for those that are apt to be offended, and to revolt from the faith and hope of the gospel ; and in a daily care and concern for all the churches of the saints ; And what a noble example have the churches of Macedonia set us, in their liberal contributions for promoting a gospel-ministry, and the common cause of Christ, among others, as well as themselves !

## C H A P. XII.

*The apostle goes on to vindicate his authority, by the extraordinary revelation that had been made to him, thought they were followed with some humbling circumstances, which were nevertheless improved to his spiritual advantage, 1,—10. Shews that several eminent signs of an apostle were in him, which ought to have encouraged the Corinthians, to speak well of him, without bringing him under a necessity of seeming to boast of them himself, 11,—13. Declares his purpose of making them a friendly visit for their edification, without any expence to them, 14,—19. But expresses his fear, lest he should be forced to use severity in his dealing with some of them, 20, 21.*

## TEXT.

IT is not expedient for me doubtless to glory: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

## PARAPHRASE.

IT is indeed (*tho*) ordinarily neither fit, nor decent, nor any way profitable to myself, to speak highly of my privileges and enjoyments, which may excite spiritual pride in my own treacherous heart, and give others too great an opinion of me; (*ver. 6, 7.*) But I am under an unhappy necessity of doing it for your sakes, that ye may not be imposed upon by those that vilify me, and want to prejudice you against my ministry and the gospel itself. If they boast of any extraordinary manifestations of God to them, I can easily match, and go beyond them, even in such things; and it may be needful for you, that I should vie with them therein\*. I will therefore proceed to speak of divine visions, and of their attending supernatural suggestions and interpretations, relating to the Lord Jesus, and vouchsafed by him; (*Gal. i. 12.*) but to avoid envy, and all appearance of self-exaltation, as much as possible, I shall only mention one remarkable instance of this nature, and that in the name of a third person.

2 I knew a man in Christ above

2 There is a certain believer in Christ, or one united to him by faith †, one whom I very well knew, and do

## N O T E S.

\* It is not improbable but that the false apostles pretended to immediate revelations; and our apostle seems to refer to this, as the reason of his mentioning what he had received of that kind, saying, (as it is in the Greek) *For or therefore I will come (αὐτοματῶς) to visions and revelations of the Lord.* Visions signify external representations, that were made to the mind by some sensible images in a trance, extacy, or rapture, while awake, or in a supernatural dream; the meaning of which was sometimes not understood, as in the cases of Pharoah's and Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. And revelations signify, not only divine instructions by imme-

diat inspiration, without any sensible manner of conveying them; but likewise the divine interpretations, that were given of the things exhibited in, and together with the viscous, as in those of the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, or in the apostle Peter's vision of the sheet. And it appears from the following verses, from other accounts of the apostle Paul's visions and revelations, and from the design of his mentioning them here to confront his enemies, that these were of this sort.

† I knew (*οἶδα*) a man in Christ, may as well be rendered in the present tense here, and at the beginning of *ver. 3.* as it is in the latter part of both these verses, where it is *ἔδειξεν*.

have fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; (that knoweth,) such as one caught up to the third heaven.

do still know; This man, upwards of fourteen years ago, was peculiarly favoured with as extraordinary a vision as ever was heard of †: Whether, at the time I am speaking of, his soul really continued in the body, or was separated from it; and so whether the scene, which visibly opened before him, together with the meaning of it, was only in a *trance*, like that of *Peter*, (*Acts* x. 10,—16); or whether the whole man, soul and body, or his soul apart from the body, was actually carried up by the power of the spirit, or by the ministry of angels, to the glorious world on high, is more than I am able to determine ‡: Which of these was, in fact, the case is known only to God; the soul itself having not been suffered, in that particular circumstance, to be certainly conscious of it. But, be this as it will, in one or other of these ways, that happy man was, in his own apprehension, during the vision, taken up, by a wonderful rapture, to the highest heaven, far above the aerial and the starry heavens, even to the heaven of heavens.

‡ And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body,

3 I say it again; for it is a delightful thought, very important to my purpose, and worthy of observation, I know a man, who was thus highly honoured of the Lord; but, as has been observed, whether his soul was all that while united with his body, or whether it was conveyed out of the body, like a separate spirit, to the blessed

#### N O T E S.

*I cannot tell, God knows: (ux ordo a Grego. dir)* And as the phrase, in *Christ*, when spoken of a person, always means a believer in Christ, or one united to him, either really, or professionally, or both; I rather prefer this interpretation to that, which would make it of the same turn and meaning with being in the *spirit*, as one carried out of himself by an extraordinary rapture: For though in the *spirit* may possibly take in this sense in *Rev.* i. 10. and iv. 2. the only places alledged for it; yet I think no passage can be found in all the New Testament, where the phrase in *Christ* is of that signification.

† Which of the apostle's visions this refers to, is disputed with great uncertainty: (see *Ejlin* and *Bishop Fell's Oxford notes*): But that *he himself* was the subject of it, though in modesty he represents it in the name of a third person, is plain from his covertly applying it to himself, *ver.* 6, 7. and it would not otherwise have been any thing to his purpose to have mentioned it at all. However, to preserve the decorum of this disguised concealment of his own concern herein, I have continued the paraphrase as if he really spoke of a third person. And there can be no im-

propriety, in his shutting himself out from the benefit of this supernatural concealment, since a heart so pure could make his story true, *Quæ cum fecimus illi, vix ea sepi a seculo. Greg. Metam. lib. xiii.*

‡ It is equally possible with God to present distant things to the imagination in the body, as if the soul were absent from it, and present with them; or to transport both soul and body, for what then he pleases, to heaven; or to give the rational soul a separate existence in the celestial regions: For a reason, and in the mean while to preserve an animal life, in a miraculous way, to the body. But since the apostle himself could not be positive whether his soul was in the body, or whether one, or both, were actually in heaven, or not, it would be vain curiosity for us to go about to determine it. However, we may be sure, that he apprehended the soul to be a *distinct substance* from the body, capable of existing, with its thinking powers, in a separate state; otherwise he could not have been at any loss to know, whether, in this divine vision, his soul continued to be in the body or not.

dy, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

blest world, the throne of God's glory, where he and angels dwell, is a point which I cannot decide, it being, for some wise reasons, hid from me, as of no great moment in the present case; since, whichever it was, *that* made no alteration in the vision itself: God only knows how, or in what manner it was made; and we may be contented to be ignorant of it.

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for

4 All that I can say with *certainty* is \*, that, in one or other of these ways, the man I am speaking of had a glorious manifestation of the Lord, like one actually taken up to the seat of the blessed, which, for the variety and fulness of its pleasure and delights, may be well styled *Paradise*, in allusion to the garden of *Eden*, in which our first parents were originally placed, for an enjoyment of God and themselves, with a vast profusion of divine goodness, before they had sinned: And there he, whom I now intend, had a clear, intelligible, and transporting revelation of heavenly things, in such unspeakably exalted language, (*ἀρρητα ρηματα αὐτοῦ*) as it is not possible for a man, who dwells in mortal flesh, and whose words and ideas are so contracted as ours, to express in all their force and sublime meaning: so far doth the language of heaven surpass all the laws and powers

#### N O T E.

\* I do not see any necessity of thinking, that these were two different raptures and visions; though, in one part of the account, the apostle is said to be caught up to the *third heaven*, and, in the other, to *paradise*: For the description is in all other respects just the same; and the whole of it refers to what happened *fourteen years ago*, no other time being mentioned. Nor are these different appellations of the place of this transaction a sufficient objection against it: For it can scarcely be supposed, but that the soul of *Christ* was in the third heaven, immediately after his death; and yet he said to the penitent thief on the cross, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, (Luke xlii. 43.); and he is represented now, in his exalted state, as *the Tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*, (Rev. ii. 7.); and the souls of the martyrs are said to be *before the throne of God, and to serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sits on the throne dwells among them, and the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, leads them unto living fountains of water*, (Rev. vii. 15, 17.).—Though the apostle speaks of *visions and revelations* in the plural number, ver. 1. and of *abundance of revelations*, ver. 7. yet those expressions may only relate to his speaking on the subject of visions and revelations, one of the most eminent of which he would particularly instance in, which also might include many things

that he then saw, and were then revealed to him; but what those things were, that he was acquainted with in the *third heaven*, is taken no notice of, unless what he saw and heard in *paradise* be allowed to relate to the third heaven; and surely the *utterable words*, mentioned in the after-part of this verse, were as likely, at least, to be heard in the third heaven, as in any other imagined paradise: And were we to admit that he was caught up twice, *that* could not, with any propriety, be called an *abundance* of revelations, unless it be supposed that many revelations, or revelations of many things were made to him in *one scene* of visions; and so it may be as well accounted for by *one*, as by *two* raptures. I should therefore think, upon the whole, that the apostle designed, in thus varying the phrase, rather to *confute*, than to establish the notion of the *Jewish Rabbin*, (if that notion had obtained before those days) as though heaven and paradise were *distinct* places of abode, and to intimate, that by the *third heaven* and *paradise* is meant *one* and the *same* blessed and glorious world, where God and the Saviour, and all the saints and angels dwell together, as the scripture often represents it, particularly in *Matth. xviii. 10. Mark xii. 25. John xiv. 2, 3. and xvi. 28. and xvii. 5, 13, 24. and Rev. v. 6, 14.* besides many other passages that might be referred to.



for a man to utter.

5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

6 For, though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that be hearth of me.

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the

powers of speech, that are known on earth: All this I am sure of, and may be the more firmly believed in asserting it, since ye see how frankly I own my ignorance of what I am not fully determined in my own mind about.

5 I may, and will speak honourably of a man, who, in such visions and revelations, was so highly dignified, and carried out of himself, and surrounded with the divine glory: But (yet) I will not say a word, that looks like boasting of any thing that relates to myself, as considered in myself; except it be of such things as carry the plain marks of weakness and infirmity, and expose me to the contempt of others; and so tend to keep me humble, even while I seem to mention them with an air of vaunting: Not that I have no room to speak of honours and privileges conferred on me, as well as of persecutions and reproaches, that I endure.

6 For if I were desirous of enlarging, with an ostentatious appearance, on things of this nature, to answer some valuable purposes of my ministry, I should not be justly chargeable with such folly and vanity, upon that account, as I might seem to be, at first sight, and as mine enemies would impute to me: For as I should have no occasion, so in conscience I would say nothing, but what is strictly true, in speaking even of those things. But I shall at present refrain from mentioning so much as I might, about my labours and sufferings for Christ; and especially about the glorious revelations that he has made to me, lest any one should be induced thereby to take up an higher opinion of me than he ought, as though I were more than a mere creature; or than there is any real foundation for, in what he sees me do, or hears me say, or in what reports he receives concerning me.

7 And lest, through the unwatchfulness, vanity, and treachery of my own heart, I myself should be lifted up with an undue and unbecoming conceit of myself, as if I were better, or more worthy than others, because of the extraordinary height, and superlative greatness (ἐξοχότης) of the revelations that have been made in an immediate manner to me, the Lord himself took an effectual method to keep me humble. As the sharpest trials often succeed the highest and sweetest enjoyments; so He who knows the imperfection of my present state, and what danger of misimproving such privileges it might expose me to, better than I do myself, wisely and graciously ordered a very abasing affliction to befall me, which was as piercing and painful to me, as a

the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

thorn is to a man's flesh, while it lyes, and causes festering and throbbings in it \* ; and which, as it was in its own nature very distressing, was as though an immediate emissary of Satan himself had been sent to attack, beat, and bruise me; (*ὁ αἰ κληρονομία*) yea, which, in effect, that malicious adversary was permitted, by his instruments, to do; he designing nothing but evil against me by it, while God meant it for good, and over-ruled it, by his Spirit and providence, to prevent my being puffed up with spiritual pride, and thinking more highly of myself than I ought, on account of the singular manifestations he had favoured me with.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

8 As this was an almost overwhelming trouble to me, I, after the example of my dear Lord himself in his extreme agony, (*Matth. xxvi. 39,—44.*) earnestly besought him in solemn prayer, as he did his Father, at three distinct times; and very often repeated my humble and importunate addresses to him, that, if it were his blessed will, the tempter might be rebuked and restrained, and I might be delivered from this violent assault upon me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly

9 And though he did not see fit to grant me the very thing which I submissively asked, any more than his Father did to grant his own request, that *if possible his bitter cup might pass from him*; yet he graciously answered my prayer in a better manner, more effectually to my help and advantage, and more to the honour of his own great name, than if he had; as his Father also did *his*, by sending an angel from heaven to strengthen him, (*Luke xxii. 43.*) and by carrying him through the glorious work of redemption: He said to me, Fear not what the devil, or any of his emissaries can do against you; my favour and love, and the gracious assistances and consolations I will afford you, are every way sufficient, and shall be effectual, to support you under, to carry you through, and to bring you off with rich improvements to your own soul, and with victory and triumph over all the difficulties and distresses, that

#### N O T E.

\* It is very uncertain what is meant by *this thorn in the flesh*, and the messenger of Satan: But, whatever it were, it seems to be some thing that betel the apostle soon after the glorious revelations before-mentioned, to keep him humble; and therefore I cannot think, as some do, that it refers to any bodily defect that naturally attended him. It rather seems to signify those *reproaches* which his adversaries loaded him with, on account of his great sufferings, as, though these were inconsistent with the high favour

of God, and were tokens of his forsaking him; and something of this kind might be permitted, in a more than ordinary manner, to be cast upon him, for keeping him humble, just after he had received such peculiar manifestations of God's gracious regards to him: But as the apostle has not told us what this *thorn in the flesh*, or messenger of Satan, was, and it is of little importance for us to know it, we may well be contented to drop all curious inquiries about it.

ly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I rely upon you: For my power is, and shall be the more illustriously displayed, and proved to be perfect in these happy effects, in proportion to your own utter inability to produce them. Having therefore received this seasonable and encouraging answer, which I have found, and I doubt not but shall always find, to be faithfully and completely fulfilled, in its proper time and way, I will rather rejoice and glory in the reproaches and persecutions which befall me for Christ's sake, (see the note on *ver. 10.*) though I be ever so incapable of myself to bear them, than be discouraged at them, or afraid, or ashamed of them; that the all-sufficient power and grace of Christ, to whom I made my address, and committed my cause, (*ver. 8.*) may abide with me, and, as it were, tabernacle upon me, (*ταβερνακωσεν με*) to surround, cover, and defend me, and to sanctify my forest tribulations, that I may be enabled to bear them, with all becoming submission and patience, humility and hope; and, at length, may be more than a conqueror over them all, thro' him that has loved me. (*Rom. viii. 37.*)

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for, when I am weak, then am I strong.

10 In this reflection, I not only endure with calm resignation, but even approve of, and am well pleased with, (*ωσταν*) all my sufferings for Christ \*; as particularly, with the defamations and revilings; with the straits and wants; with the malignant and most furious persecutions; and with the various difficulties and troubles of every kind, which come upon me for professing, owning, and preaching Christ and his gospel, and for the honour of his name: For when by these means, the weakness of human nature is most felt and seen, and I appear to be most contemptible in the eyes of others; even then am I most of all, and most sensibly, *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man*, (*Eph. iii. 16. and vi. 10.*) to behave with holy fortitude and courage under them, and to obtain the most glorious victories over them.

11 I am become a fool in glorying; ye have com-

11 In speaking so much of these things with an air of self-commendation, I indeed, though with great reluctance, act a part, which is generally accounted very foolish, and which were there not the most urgent reasons for it, with regard to the glory of God, the credit of the gospel, and your establishment and edification, really

#### N O T E.

\* By *infirmities*, all along in this discourse, are evidently meant *sufferings*, which in the weakness of human nature, as it is subject to them, is weakened, and becomes contemptible by them, and unable of itself to bear them, especially in a becoming manner: And there-

fore I take *infirmities*, in this place, not to signify any thing distinct from the several particulars there mentioned, but as a general term, inclusive of them all, which are specified in the following *1. 2. 3. 4. 5.*

compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

really would be, and I myself should think to be, very weak and silly : But ye, of all others, ought not to blame me for it ; because ye yourselves have constrained me to it ; for had ye been just to my character, answerable to what it has appeared among you ; and had none of you sided with the false apostles that have wrongfully upbraided me, there would have been no occasion for me to have spoke one word on my own behalf, to confute their calumnies ; and ye, having had so much experience of what God has done by me, ought yourselves to have been my advocates, and to have spoke honourably of me and of my labours : For I may appeal to your own consciences, that I have not only far exceeded all those pretended apostles, who would mislead you, and prejudice your minds against me and my ministry, (*chap. xi. 21, &c.*) but that I have been in my conversation and sufferings, preaching and miracles, and in the success of my labours among you, equal, at least, to any of the true apostles of Christ themselves, whether *Peter*, or others that stand highest in any of your account : Though, after all, I am free to own, that in myself and in my humble account of myself, I really am a poor, worthless, insignificant creature, *not sufficient of myself to do, or so much as think any thing, as of myself ; but all my sufficiency is of God, and all my success is from him.* (*Chap. iii. 5. and 1 Cor. iii. 7.*)

12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds.

12 Whatever others may conceive and say of me, or whatever I have been to them, the evident proofs and tokens of a true apostle of Jesus Christ, were unquestionably manifested in the things that were done by my ministry among you, which I fulfilled much to your advantage, (*chap. iii. 2, 3. and 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2.*) and in which I behaved with a meek and sedate command of temper, and with great long-suffering, under all the wants, hardships, and troubles, that I endured in preaching the gospel to you, (*Acts xviii. 1,—13.*) which was likewise confirmed by all sorts of miracles, that may be called *signs*, as they carried the plainest marks of God's owning me, and being with me ; and may be deemed *wonders*, as they were amazing exertions of divine power, above, and against the course of nature ; and may be styled *mighty deeds*, as they were productions of the most difficult and important effects, which nothing short of God's own almighty arm could have brought to pass.

13 For what is it wherein ye were

13 For as to the benefit which ye received by my ministrations, In what particular instance can it be said, that

inferior to other churches, except in that I myself was not burdensome to you; forgive me this wrong,

that ye have not been enriched with spiritual gifts and privileges, as much as any of all the churches of Christ, whether planted by me, or some other apostle? Or wherein have I been wanting to you more than to any of them? I am persuaded that nothing of this sort can be alledged; unless it should be thought a piece of disdainful partiality in me, that, while I received maintenance from other churches, I would take none of you<sup>2</sup>. If any should put such a disingenuous construction upon it, ye, instead of being influenced by them, may well pardon an omission, which, on the contrary, was designed as a peculiar favour, every way to your advantage; and if there were anything wrong in thus preaching the gospel freely to you, one would think it a wrong done to myself, (1 Cor. iv. 12.) and to other churches, (chap. xi. 7, 8.) rather than to you; and therefore surely ye, of all others, must needs pass it by.

14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you: for the child-

14 Observe in how kind and friendly a manner I have always behaved toward you; I have thrice† desired, designed, and prepared to make you a visit: The *first* time, I had the pleasure of accomplishing it, when I planted the gospel among you, (Acts xviii. 8,—11. and 1 Cor. iii. 6.); after that I purposed seeing you again, but was prevented, on further thoughts, by my own tenderness toward you, lest I should be obliged to proceed with more rigor than I chose against some among you, (see the note on chap. i. 23.); and I am now a *third* time intending and getting ready, (1 Cor. xxi. 10) God willing, to come ere long to you: And as, when I was with you, I took care that it might not be at your expence; so I am still resolved to give you my labours freely, without being chargeable to any of you; for my heart is so full of affection to you, that I do not desire any of your temporal good things, to less-

#### N O T E.

\* *Forgive me this wrong*, is generally thought to have been spoken by the apostle in the *ironical* way; but Monsieur Fleury understands him, as seriously excusing himself on this account; because the faithful, at that time, were so charitable and grateful to their teachers, that they were grieved if they did not receive something from them; and were ready to be offended, as thinking it a mark of contempt or disdain. *L'Abbe Fleury*. Ecdesi. lii. lib. i. sec. 50.

† As far as appears, the apostle had been already but once at Corinth, an account of which we have in Acts xviii. 1, etc. For his journey through Greece and Macedonia, mentioned Acts xx. 1, 3. is generally concluded to have been after the writing of this epistle;

and he speaks of his next coming, as the *second* time, chap. xiii. 1. and shews desiring to come to them, that they might have a *second* benefit, chap. i. 15. The *third* time therefore refers, not to the times of his having been actually with them, but of his having intended it; and as it seems that his design of making them a visit, which is mentioned chap. i. 15. and 1 Cor. xvi. 5. relates to one and the same time, he now speaks of his having a *third* time formed a resolution of doing it, which he soon afterwards fulfilled, as may be gathered from Acts xx. 1, 3. and, while he was with them, he wrote his epistle to the Romans, as appears from Rom. xvi. 13. See the note there, and the preface to that epistle; and see *Ephes* and *Philip* on this place.

children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

sen you in them, or enrich myself by them; but all that I seek, and aim at, is the welfare and salvation of your souls: For I look upon you as my spiritual children, whom I have instrumentally begotten to Christ by the gospel, (1 Cor. iv. 15.) and shall ever treat with all paternal care and affection, in providing for you spiritual benefit, without expecting any return of your worldly substance; as being determined, in this case, to square my conduct according to the general rule, that though children ought to relieve their necessitous parents, (Mark vii. 10,—13, and 1 Tim. v. 16.) ; yet they are not ordinarily obliged to lay up for their parents, as though their parents were most likely to survive them, but it is the duty of parents to make proper provision for their children, who may be supposed, in the common course of nature, to out-live them.

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

15 And considering myself in this relation to you, I will cheerfully spend my time, strength and labour, and all my temporal ease, honour and advantages, and will, with pleasure, wear out my life itself, (*ὡς τὸν θυγατρὸν μου*) for the good of your souls; even though the ungrateful and undutiful return I should meet with for it, were, that the more abundant, tender, affectionate and disinterested love I have, and shew, toward you, the less I should be respected and valued by you; yea, though ye should so slight me, for my pains, as to have less esteem of me than of those that impose upon you.

16 But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile.

16 But be this as it will, and supposing it to be the case with some of you, ye well know that I did not, as I lawfully might, put you to the charge of maintaining me, but preached the gospel freely to you: Nevertheless, your false teachers, who are deceitful workers, (chap. xi. 13.) invidiously suggest\*, as though, being an artful designing man, I refused taking any thing of you myself, that I might under-handedly draw you in, to be the more liberal to others, whom I employed among you; and so by a cunning fetch might get the more of you, through them, for my own use.

17 But

#### N O T E.

\* Most expositors consider the whole of this verse as an objection of the apostle's adversaries against him; and so the sense stands thus: "But some suggest, that though I did not burden you myself; yet, being a crafty man, I have employed others to do it, and so have over-reached you." The words (*εἰ τοιούτως*) *But be it so*, may be taken in this reference, or in that given in the paraphrase; the reader may choose which he pleases: But the following verses plainly show, that what is said, at least in the latter

part of this verse, is mentioned as the ill-natured suggestion of the apostle's enemies, and not as what he really did: For, otherwise, there is no good connection in what he there adds to vindicate himself; but, considering these verses as an answer to their calumnies, they are strongly and directly to that purpose; nor is it at all consistent with his character and profession, chap. i. 12, and 16, 2, to suppose, that he really practised any guileful arts to win up in the Corinthians.

17 Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you?

18 I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps?

19 Again, think you that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

20 For I fear, lest when I come I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings,

17 But, in answer to such groundless and unrighteous insinuations, let me ask you, Did I ever make the least advantage of you for myself, by means of any of those, my fellow-labourers in the gospel, whom I sent, in my absence, to be the helpers of your joy, (*chap. i. 24.*) to rectify the disorders that were among you, (*ch. vii. 6, 7.*) and to excite your charity toward the poor saints in Judea? (*ch. viii. 6.*)

18 Ye know that I intreated, and prevailed upon the beloved Titus to come to you, and with him I sent another excellent brother, whose praise is in all the churches, (*chap. viii. 6. 17, 18.* See the note on *ver. 18.*) and, when they were with you, Did Titus and his companion, any more than I myself, take any thing of you for their own labours, or for my subsistence? Did we not all act with the same disinterested generosity toward you, like persons conducted and influenced by the same good spirit of God, and by the same benevolent temper of mind? Did not *they* exactly follow my example, and all of us agree in the same measures of freely doing you good?

19 I would ask you again, Do any of you imagine, that, in all this, I only make specious pretences, by way of apology to you, for myself and my brethren, that we may gain the greater credit with you, for some sinister ends? or do any of you think, that I sent Titus and his associate, (*ver. 18.*) to excuse *myself* from coming to you? I solemnly declare, in the presence of the all-seeing-God, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and a believer in him, that it is no such matter: But, my dearly beloved in the Lord, what I have done in this, as in all my other behaviour toward you, is merely to support my apostolic authority, that my ministry, by the blessing of God, may be the more successful to your spiritual edification.

20 For, as I hinted before, (*chap. i. 23, 24, and ii. 1.*) I am much afraid, lest, whenever I may have opportunity of making my intended visit, I shall not find you all so orderly, and obedient to the authority of Christ in me, as I heartily wish ye were? and that I shall be obliged to exercise the power which he has given me, in a severer manner than ye would willingly have me: (*chap. x. 2, and xiii. 10.*) I fear lest I should find that, through hearkning to seducers, there are, among some of you, fierce and uncharitable disputes-for victory-sake; envious tempers and talkers; warm and angry passions; carnal contentions; revilings of others behind their backs; clandestine slanders; proud and haughty

ings, whisperings,  
feelings, in-  
munks :

21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repeated of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed.

haughty boastings, and disdainful insults ; and a tumultuous carriage one towards another. This has been one great reason of my deferring to come to you so long as I have. (*Chap. i. 23.*)

21 And I am full of fears, lest, when I come to you again, my God, whose I am, and whom I serve, should call me, not to glorying of you, as I have done on particular occasions, (*chap. vii. 4.*) but to shame, sorrow and abasement, on your account, in seeing the name of Christ so much dishonoured, and my labour so much lost upon you : And lest, instead of rejoicing to behold your faith and order, I should be called to lament and mourn over many of you, and, with grief of soul, to deal sharply with them who had been guilty of very enormous crimes before I wrote to you, (*τρεπμαρτυρηται*) and who, notwithstanding all admonitions and reproofs in my former letter, and by other means, have not yet been duly convinced of their sins, nor shewn any ingenuous remorse, or sincere repentance for them \* ; as particularly for the shameful adultery, and fornication, and the immodest words and actions, with which they have defiled themselves, directly contrary to their Christian obligations and profession.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What vicissitudes are there in the Christian's comforts and afflictions ! He is sometimes lifted up, as it were, to the third heaven, which is like a paradise for all delights, and unutterable glories ; and he presently falls under the buffetings of Satan, and the forest trials, which God orders and over-rules to prevent spiritual pride, lest, through the corruption of nature, it should rise, even upon the ground of the most distinguishing and endearing manifestations of divine favour. How earnestly doth the believer betake himself to the Lord Jesus for deliverance from temptations and afflictions, which he finds to be more than his own match ! And how certain is it, that his prayers shall not be in vain, tho' they may not always be answered in the very thing that he asked ! A promise of Christ's grace, as sufficient for us, and of his strength, as to be made perfect in our weakness, is the noblest support under every difficulty or danger, and the best security for a due improvement of it, and for victory and triumph in the issue. We may well glory in those trials, that give occasion for, and are attended with, the most evident demonstrations of the power of Christ, as resting upon us ; though in the midst of the highest privileges, manifestations, and attainments, we are in ourselves, and ought to be on our own account, as nothing. How happy is it, when the servants of Christ can appeal to him for the sincerity of their aims in all their holy ministrations ; and can appeal to the consciences of their hearers, that the signs of their divine mission are made known among them, by their patient, faithful, tender, and disinterested behaviour ; by the good fruits of their labours ; and by plain tokens of God's being with them ; and how cheerfully will they spend, and be spent, for the good of souls, and do all things for their edification, while they seek not theirs, but them ; and resolve, by the grace of God, to persist therein, even though the more they love them, and, like pa-

rents

### N O T E.

\* It seems from hence that, though the incestuous person was brought to repentance, guilty of impurities, to the scandal of their holy profession, and had not yet been reclaimed.



rears, provide for their spiritual welfare, the less they were to be loved of them! How desirous should they all be to act under the influence of the same divine Spirit, and with the same Christian temper; and to tread in the same laudable steps, in pursuing the great ends of their ministry! And, as far as they do so, how ready should their people be to encourage, and speak well of them, and to save them the irksome task of saying any thing that looks like self-applause, to vindicate their own characters! But, O how humbling and grieving is it, to be not only themselves vilified, but to see their hopes blasted, and their labour lost upon those, who, instead of answering just expectations of yielding obedience to the authority of Christ, in all holy conversation and godliness, are guilty of such scandalous enormities in temper and behaviour, and continue so impenitent in them, as to need the severest animadversions upon them!

## C H A P. XIII.

*The apostle threatens to punish obstinate offenders, at his next coming among the Corinthians, and gives the reasons of it, 1,—6. Prays for their reformation to prevent it, which would give him the greatest pleasure, 7,—10. And concludes the epistle with a salutation and benediction, 11,—14.*

## TEXT.

**T**his is the third time I am coming to you: in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

## PARAPHRASE.

**I** Am now a third time designing and preparing, as has been said but now, (*chap. xii. 14.* see the note there,) to visit you, and correct the disorders, which, after all, still remain among you, (*chap. x. 2.*); and as our blessed Lord directed, (*Matth. xviii. 16.*) in church-proceedings against an offending brother, that *in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established*\*, according to the rule laid down in the law of Moses, (*Deut. xvii. 6.* and *xix. 15.*) so the notices and warnings I have given you, in my former epistle, (*chap. iv. 19, 21.*) and now, once and again in this, of my resolution to come and chastise obstinate delinquents; and *Sosthenes's* joining with me in the first epistle, (*chap. i. 1.*) and *Timothy's* in this, (*chap. i. 1.*) are all the previous admonitions, that are necessary, and may as fully assure you of what ye are to expect, as if it had been depoted by two or three credible witnesses, *viva voce*, in any court of judicature whatsoever.

\* I told you before, and foretel

2 In my first letter I threatened what I would do, and now again repeat it to you beforehand, which shews how unwilling I am to proceed to extremities, if it be possible

## N O T E.

\* Here seems to be a most direct reference to Christ's order about the method of proceeding with church-members that have given offence, *Matth. xviii. 15,—17*: But as this was conformable to the law of Moses, I have also brought that into the paraphrase; and the apostle's two epistles, either with, or without the consideration of the *persons*, that joined with him in sending them, are

manifestly the *two or three witnesses* here intended, as they answered the end of repeated admonitions. (See *Hammond, Whitby, and Locke* on the place.) And therefore, if these offenders should still continue to be incorrigible, and the church to neglect their duty in dealing with them, the apostle would very regularly exercise his authority, in severely punishing them.

tel you as if I were present the second time, and being absent, now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not spare:

possible to prevent it, (*ver. 10.*) and which ought to have as much weight with you as if I were now a second time personally talking to you; and, for want of opportunity, through distance of place, to speak my mind by word of mouth, I now send it in writing to those disorderly persons that had gone into scandalous practices, even before I wrote my first epistle; (*ver. 10.*) as also to all others among you, who, between that time and this, have been, or are in danger of being, found guilty of any miscarriages: I positively assure them all, that when I may come to you again, I will punish those that have sinned and not reformed; be they who or what they will, or be they ever so many, I will deal sharply with them, (*ver. 10.*) that they may be brought to repentance, and that others may fear to follow their former sinful example. (*1 Tim. v. 20.*)

3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.

3 This I will certainly do, in vindication of my sacred office, and of the honour of my Lord, since some of you, and particularly your false teachers and their adherents, are so bold and daring, as to question my apostolic commission, and demand an experiment (*ver. 11.*) and proof of it, and of the reality of Christ's speaking by me, in the doctrines and commandments which I have delivered, and in what I threaten to do to offenders in his name. Their opposition to me herein is indeed no less, than an opposing Christ himself, who has undeniably acted toward you, not in a weak and insufficient manner, but with mighty power and energy in, and among you; as appears by the great and wonderful things he has done, both in a way of rich mercy, in your conversion, in the miracles wrought among you, and in the manifold gifts and graces he bestowed upon you; and in a way of awful judgment, in his inflicting sickness and death on disorderly walkers in your church. (*1 Cor. xi. 30.*)

4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live

4 For though he underwent a terrible and ignominious crucifixion, through the infirmity and passibility of his human nature, which was as liable to that as to any other sort of death; and though he might thereby appear, in the account of some, to have been a merely weak and mortal creature, like other men, and incapable of saving others, because he did not think fit to save himself from the death of the cross, (*Matth. xxvii. 40,—44.*) yet by virtue of his divine power, which he exerts together with the Father, he rose again from the dead, and now lives in his exalted state, on the throne of his glory, to exercise all authority in heaven and earth: Even so (*ver. 13.*) we likewise, his faithful ser-

live with him by  
the power of God  
toward you.

vants, appear by our sufferings for his sake, and in conformity to him to be but weak and despicable men, and are, in the account of some of you, vain insignificant creatures in the profession we make of relation to Christ and of receiving authority from him, as though we really had no interest in him, or could do nothing by virtue of any communications from him: but as surely as he lives in all authority and glory, we, by the same divine power, shall shew, in remarkable effects, that, how contemptible soever we be in ourselves, or in the esteem of others, the life of Jesus animates us and is manifested in our vigorous actions toward you, as well as that, in due time, we shall live in glory with him.

3 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

5 Instead therefore of your sitting in judgment, and passing unrighteous censures upon us, as though there were no proof of Christ's speaking in me, (*ver. 3.*) or in my dear associates, (*chap. xii. 18.*) look into your own hearts and ways, and bring them to the touchstone of the word of God; and, in carefully comparing them with that infallible standard, make close inquiry, whether ye yourselves have believed to the saving of your souls, and have a real and evident interest in Christ, through faith in him: Pursue the diligent search, by divine assistance, till ye have brought this important point to an issue \*, and have the clearest proof in yourselves, whether ye be sincere believers, and whether faith be the governing principle in your own hearts, or not: What! are ye strangers to the transactions that have passed between God and your own souls, and to your own state and condition, way and walk before him, as some of you seem to be, by your contentions and disorders, and various provocations, and by your unworthy treatment of me, and of the gospel of Christ as delivered in my ministry? It is a sin and a shame for you to be ignorant how things are with you: And, as ye are professors of Christianity, do not ye know that Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, dwells in your hearts by faith, with powerful influence and dominion there? Ye surely, in the light of the Spirit, may arrive at some satisfaction about this; unless, after all your high pretences, and flourishing gifts, there be something very dif-

#### N O T E.

\* *Prove your own selves*, (*καυρει δοκιμασαι*) is a metaphor taken from the trying of metals by the touchstone, or some other way, to prove, whether they be good and pure, or not; and so signifies such a trial of persons and things, as may shew, or prove, whether they be genuine, or spurious, in order to

their being allowed of, or rejected: And, with a beautiful correspondence herunto, the apostle speaks in this, and the two next verses, of persons being (*δοκιμασιν* or *αδοκιμασιν*) approved, or not approved, (which is harshly rendered *reprobate*) as found to be so, upon examination or trial.

disallowable, (*οὐκ ἔστιν ἀποδεχόμενον*) and much amiss in you; or ye be really disapproved of God, as hypocrites.

6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobated.

6 But, whatever any of you may prove to be, my humble dependence on the power and grace of Christ is, that ye shall have evident demonstration, by what he will further do by us, of our being, not disapproved, but owned of him, as true believers, and his faithful servants.

7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

7 In the mean while, my heart's desire and prayer to the Lord for you is, that none of you may be seduced into any evil way, or found guilty of any iniquity against God, or others; so as to force me to exercise severity, when I come among you: I earnestly pray for this, as being desirous, not that I may have an opportunity of proving my apostolic authority by punishing obstinate offenders; but that, through divine grace, ye may be reformed without it, and may be brought, by gentler methods, to practise those things that are honourable and becoming, (*το καλον*) in the sight of God and of all good men. This would give me the utmost pleasure, even though, for want of a proper occasion to chastise the refractory and disobedient, ye should judge of me, as if I were a false apostle, disapproved of God, and destitute of power to execute what I have once and again threatened.

8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

8 For I have neither inclination nor authority, nor would my conscience toward God, or my love to you, suffer me to do any thing contrary to what is right and fit, or against those that walk orderly, according to the truth of the gospel, any more than against the gospel itself; but all that I hereby aim at, am authorized for, and cheerfully engage in, is, to reclaim back-sliders, and to encourage and promote your soundness in the faith, and your integrity in heart and life.

9 For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

9 For so great is my affectionate concern for you, that I should exceedingly rejoice to see the time, when, thro' your repentance and amendment, I may be as much restrained from inflicting any severe censures, as if I really were incapable of it; and when ye may be so strong in faith, holiness and obedience, as not to need it: Yea, I heartily wish, (*τον υμῶν κατεργασθῆναι*) that all things were brought into good order among you; that ye were entirely knit together in faith and love, like a complete, and well-compacted body; and that every grace were perfected in you all, and there were no defect, or remainder of sin, in any of you.

10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being

10 It is therefore with these kind thoughts and desires concerning you, that now, while I am absent from you,

being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me, to edification, and not to destruction.

you, I write some things to warn and caution you, and others to counsel and encourage you; lest, when I come among you, I should be obliged, contrary to my own inclination and choice, to make use of terrible methods in dealing with you, according to the authority which the Lord Jesus has given me, as has been observed, (*chap. x. 8.*) and I always desire to employ it, for the preservation of the purity of the church, and of the honour of Christ in it, and for establishing and increasing the faith, comfort and holiness of the whole body; and not (*εὐλαβούμενος*) for injuring any of its members; nor for the final destruction, even of the worst of them, by driving them to despair; but that they may be brought to repentance, and their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (*1 Cor. v. 5.*)

11 Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

11 To conclude, my brethren, whom, after all, as to the generality of you, I esteem as such in the Lord, May all manner of prosperity and happiness attend you! In order hereunto \*, (*καταρτισθε*) set those things to rights, which are amiss and disjointed among you, that the whole church may be reduced to a regular state and knit together as one body; and let every one of you labour, in the strength of Christ, to attain to the highest degrees of every grace and virtue, and if possible, to sinless perfection: Encourage yourselves in the Lord your God; and be exhorted, one by another, as well as all of you by me, (*παροτρυνόμενοι*) to do every thing that is excellent, that ye may be filled with the joys of faith and of a good conscience: join, as with one heart and soul, in your sentiments of the great truths of the gospel, in your zeal to promote them, and in your Christian temper, one towards another: Study the things that make for peace and brotherly love, that there may remain no more party-strifes, or angry contentions, jars and schisms among you: And, in case ye be helped to cultivate and abound in these things, ye may depend upon it, that the blessed God himself, who is the fountain of love and peace, the author, giver, commander and approver of them, will take up his gracious and complacential abode with you; will manifest his special favour to you; and will make you to increase with all the increases of God. (*Col. ii. 19.*)

12 Greet one another

12 In token of your being thus united in heart, design and practice, salute each other with a chaste, sincere

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle takes his leave of the Corinthians here, much in the same manner as he began with them in his first epistle, chap. i. 10. which may intimate, that the points

mentioned, there and here, were what he principally aimed at, and pursued, in both these epistles.

another with an holy kiss.

13 All the saints salute you:

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen.

cere and religious kiss, the usual symbol of Christian love and sacred friendship. (See the note on *Rom. xvi. 16.*)

13 To set you an example of mutual kindness and respect, all the holy brethren, in these parts, send their affectionate salutations; *wishing, above all things, that your souls may prosper.* (3 John, *ver. 2.*)

14 And as it was the priest's office to bless the children of *Israel* in the name of the Lord, (*Num. vi. 23,—27.*) so, to shew the authority which Christ has given me, and how much my heart is with you, my prayer for you, and the blessing, which, suitable to the nature of the gospel-dispensation, I, as his servant, pronounce in his name upon you, is this, May the free favour, and gracious presence and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, through whom, and by whose merit and mediation, all spiritual and eternal blessings are procured and conveyed! And may the self-moving love of God the Father, which is the original spring and source of all distinguishing blessings! And may (*καὶ οὕτως*) the richest communications of the Holy Spirit, by whom these blessings are effectually applied, and we are brought into a peculiar fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, (1 John i. 3.) and into a participation of their love and grace, in all their happy fruits and effects! May all this, I say, be continually with you, and abound toward you, as a church, and towards every individual member therein, that all, and each of you, may be completely blessed by these three Divine Persons, in whose name ye were baptized, (*Matth. xxviii. 19.*) and who are undividedly one in nature and will, design and operation! In testimony of the sincerity of my desire of all these great things for you, and of my hope that it shall be fulfilled in you, I heartily add, and would have every one of you join with me in saying, *Amen.*

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How nearly doth it concern us to examine and prove ourselves, whether we be really united to Christ by faith; and our state, frame, and behaviour, be approved of God, or not! If church-members, contrary to their holy profession, go into, and obstinately persist in, such evil courses, as shew that they are disapproved of God; What an awful necessity is there of exercising Christ's authority, in dealing sharply with them, and not sparing them, that they may be brought to repentance! But, O how much more desirable is it, to have them reclaimed by gentler methods! And with what care and tenderness should all previous admonitions be given them, to the amount of two or three witnesses, before they are proceeded against to extremity! The faithful servants of Christ will be approved of him, in all the measures they take, according to his will, whatever others may think of them; and though, in conformity to their Lord, they make but a poor figure in the world, and are liable to sufferings and death, through

the infirmity of human flesh; yet what a comfort is it to think, that, by the power of God, they shall be assisted and owned in this world, and shall be raised to live with Christ in all the glory of the next! And how fain would they have others accepted and approved of him too! They cannot, in conscience, do any thing knowingly against the just reasons of things, any more than against the gospel itself, or against those that walk uprightly, according to its truth: and they heartily wish, that all the authority, which Christ has committed to them, might be to the edification and salvation of all, and not to the destruction of any under their charge. How sincerely do they desire that every thing may be perfected which concerns the professors of Christ's name, that they may be comforted and encouraged, may agree in evangelical principles and designs, may live together with brotherly love, and may salute each other, after the most Christian manner, in the Lord! The God of love and peace will certainly make his abode with all who are thus united in faith and love, and in the fellowship of the gospel: And that he may do so, it becomes the ministers of Christ to leave the Apostle's benediction with them, saying, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the love of God the Father; and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, *Amen*. The Lord grant it may be so with every one of us!

A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Apostle P A U L's Epistle  
T O T H E  
G A L A T I A N S,  
In the Form of a P A R A P H R A S E.

The Preface to the EPISTLE to the GALATIANS.

**T**HE constitution of gospel-churches is so different from the *national*-church of the Jews, that when the apostle wrote to Christians that were formed into several religious societies in *Galatia*, which was a province of the *Lesser Asia*, he stiled them the *churches*, (*chap. i. 2, 22.*) and not the *church* of *Galatia*; and when he spoke of any particular assembly that associated together for stated worship, according to the order of the gospel, he constantly called it the *church* at such a place; as the church at *Corinth*, (*1 Cor. i. 2.*) the church at *Cenchrea*, (*Rom. xvi. 1.*) and the church of the *Thessalonians*, (*1 Thess. i. 1.*) and the like.

The *Galatian*-churches were planted by the apostle *Paul's* own ministry, as appears from *Acts* xvi. 6. and xviii. 23. compared with *Gal.* i. 8, 9. and consisted, very much, at least, of *Gentile* believers, that were converted from among the idolatrous heathens, (*chap.* iv. 8.) and had been admitted to all the privileges and blessings of the gospel-state without being circumcised. This was so offensive to *judaizing* zealots, and particularly, as appears from *chap.* i. 7. and v. 9, 10. to some noted false teacher or teachers, who probably came from *Judea* upon hearing of it, that they endeavoured, and that with too great success, to run down *Paul* by sinking his apostolic authority below that of *Peter*, and the other apostles of the circumcision; and to corrupt the pure doctrine of justification alone through faith in Christ, by super-adding the works of the law under the bond of circumcision, as necessary for that purpose. Hence they insisted, that, *Except a man were circumcised after the manner of Moses, he could not be saved*, and that he ought to keep the law of *Moses*, (*Acts* xv. 1, 5.); and the apostle himself testified once and again, that *Every one who was circumcised was a debtor to do the whole law*; but that, to be circumcised with this view, would render *Christ* of none effect to them, and would subvert the whole gospel, (*Gal.* v. 2, 3, 4.)

This, as I apprehend, throws a good light upon the main argument of this epistle: It lets us into the *principal reason* why the *judaizing* Christians, that were enemies to the free grace of the gospel, or to salvation alone by Jesus Christ through faith in him, so strenuously pleaded for the *Gentiles* being circumcised: And why the apostle so zealously opposed it: And it shews, that not only the works of the ceremonial, but likewise of the moral law, were designed to be excluded from having any share in the great business of justification; for circumcision bound a man over to an observance of the moral as well as ceremonial law, as may be gathered from the apostle's saying, (*Rom.* ii. 26, 27.) *If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision, dost transgress the law?* (See the note there.) And indeed in some parts of both these epistles (which the most professedly of all others treat on the doctrine of justification) several things are said of the law, as may be seen in their places, that must at least include the moral law; and as these *Gentile-Galatian* converts were never under the ceremonial law; nor under any divine obligation to observe it, they could have no immediate concern with Christ's *redeeming from the curse of the law, and redeeming them that were under the law*, (*chap.* iii. 13. and iv. 5.) unless it included redemption from the moral law as a covenant of works, and from its curse.

When the apostle wrote this epistle is very uncertain; some think it was before and others after, his second journey into *Galatia*, which we have an account of in *Acts* xviii. 23. However, it is plain from *Gal.* i. 6. that it was soon after he had been and preached among them:

And



And as his principal design in writing it was to vindicate his own apostolic commission, and the gospel-doctrine of justification, from the perverse attempts of his enemies to defeat them; so, in the two first chapters, he maintains that his office, as an apostle, was *immediately* from Christ, and no way inferior to that of any other apostle; and expresses his great concern, that the *Galatians* were so soon converted or turned away from the gospel, which he had preached to them. In the two next chapters, he establisheth the doctrine of justification alone by Christ through faith in him, without the works of the law. And, in the two last, he exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free; to take heed of abusing that liberty, by an indulgence of the flesh; and to exercise various Christian graces, and practise several duties, which are indeed common to all believers; but some of which the state of things among them more especially called for: And, to leave the stronger impression upon their minds, he closes the whole with an account of the different tempers and views that influenced him and the *judaizing* teachers, and with his usual benediction.

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle Paul prefaces his epistle to the churches of Galatia, with asserting his apostolic character, in opposition to such as lessened it, and with a salutation and doxology, 1,—5. Sharply reproves the Galatians for so soon revolting from the gospel of Christ, under the influence of detestable teachers, 6,—10. Proves the divine authority of his doctrine and mission by the end of his preaching, and by his having received them, not from man, but by immediate revelation from Christ himself, 11, 12. And, to convince them of this, he declares what he was before his conversion and calling, 13, 14.; and how he behaved after it, 15,—24.*

## TEXT.

**P**AUL, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)

## PARAPHRASE.

**I** PAUL, who, whatsoever some may suggest to the contrary, am constituted an apostle, not by any ordinance of men, as in the case of civil-magistrates, (1 *Pet.* ii. 13.) nor in the usual way, in which ordinary ministers of Christ are called to, and vested in their sacred office; nor by the choice of men; no, nor by power communicated to me, as the apostleship was to *Matthias*, (*Acts* i. 23, &c.) by the intervention of any man whatsoever\*; but I received my qualifications, instructions,

## N O T E.

\* Though *Ananias* foretold *Paul*, at his conversion, what use God would make of him, (*Acts* xii. 14, 15.) yet he, being at most but a minister of inferior rank, could not ordain *Paul* to the apostleship; nor is

there the least appearance of his attempting any thing of that nature: And though the prophets and teachers in the church at *Antioch* separated *Pentand Barnabas* to the work of the ministry, (*ch.* xiii. 2, 3.) yet as it

instructions, and authority for it by the immediate call and commission of Jesus Christ, (*Acts* xxii. 17, — 21. and xxvi. 16, 17, 18.) and by the express appointment of God the Father, (*Acts* xxii. 14, 15.) who revealed his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, (*ver.* 16.) and who, by a judicial act, as well as by the same divine power that wrought in my conversion, (*Eph.* i. 19, 20.) raised him from the dead †, in testimony of his having compleatly satisfied the law and justice, and brought in everlasting righteousness, for the justification of all that believe in him.

1 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 I, and all the Christian brethren || here present with me, consenting and approving, send this epistle to the several churches, that by the blessing of God on my ministry, were planted in the province of *Galatia* ‡.

3 Our hearts desire and prayer to God for you is, that the riches of his free, undeserved, and forfeited favour may be extended to you; and that all the spiritual prosperity, which is included in peace with God, with one another, and in each of your own souls, may abound towards you from God the Father, the first person in the adorable trinity, and first mover in the whole affair of salvation; and from our Lord Jesus Christ the second person of the sacred Three, who, in our nature, is the only mediator between God and men, and is the purchaser and dispenser of all blessings to us.

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

4 Who, in his matchless condescension and love, freely surrendered his soul and body, that were infinitely dignified by their personal union with his divine nature, and gave up his great and glorious self to the most painful and shameful sufferings and death, as a propitiatory sacrifice to make atonement for our sins, who deserved nothing but tribulation and wrath, that he, on the foot of righteousness might by price, as well as power, pluck us as brands out of the fire, (*ῥησανται*) and rescue us, in his time and way, from the evil temper and oppressions, designs,

#### N O T E S.

was the ministry to which Christ had already called them, and as these prophets and teachers were likewise officers of lower rank than apostles, *Paul* and *Barnabas* could not be supposed to receive their commission from them, who only followed the express order of the Holy Ghost in what they did. (See the note on *Acts* xiii. 3.)

† *Luther* observes on this verse, how fitly and suitable to the main purport of this epistle, the apostle here speaks of God the Father, not as Creator, &c. but as having raised Christ from the dead. And we may take notice, that, in the preface to his kindred epistle, with respect to the great doc-

trine of justification, he, with like justness of thought, mentions the resurrection of Christ, (*Rom.* i. 4.)

|| The brethren may either signify those ministers that were *Paul's* companions in travel, or the members of the church where he was when he wrote this epistle.

‡ The reason of the apostle's directing this epistle to the churches of *Galatia*, without giving them any character, as he does all the others that he wrote to, seems to be their general defection from the great doctrine of justification alone by Christ, through faith in him.

designs, and practices of the men of this world, from all the iniquities that abound in it, and from all the dangerous snares and depraved customs and fashions of this degenerate age; as also from the *Jewish* constitution, which is incapable of giving us life, and is exceedingly corrupted by the men of this generation, and that he might, at length, take us out of this miserable and sinful world itself to a better \*. All which he has done according to the eternal appointment and good pleasure of God, even our Father, who is reconciled to us through the blood of his cross, and who, on his account loves us, and deals with us as his children.

§ To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

§ To whom, together with his eternal Son †, all possible honour and praise, in the most exalted strains are due, and will be so through all generations on earth, and to endless ages in heaven, for this unparalleled work of redemption, in which infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth, shine forth with united and endearing glory. For this, as well as for his own divine perfections, may he be glorified as he ought to be, and for ever will be! *Amen.*

¶ I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel:

¶ When I reflect on the delightful and transcendent glory of this scheme of salvation, and on its suitability and high importance to lost sinners, as the only way in which they can be saved; I stand amazed, and am grieved at heart to hear of your sin and folly, in that so quickly after ye had been made acquainted with it, and seemed to receive the truth in the love of it, any of you should be carried away in your sentiments, affection, and practice, not only from me, who was instrumental in calling you to the fellowship of the gospel ‡, but, which is worst of all, from the blessed God himself, by whose commission I preached to you, and who by my ministry called you to partake of the benefits of redemption, such as reconciliation with God, justification and adoption, and eternal glory, which are discovered and proposed in the gospel of Christ's grace, and are bestowed by his free favour (*ἡ χάρις*) on them that believe. I say, it surprizes and troubles me, to think that any

#### N O T E S.

\* As the word (*αιων*) here rendered the world, signifies likewise the age, or generation; a turn is given to the paraphrase, that takes in both these senses, and that, with some little variation, includes Mr Locke's notion of this present age. (See his note on the place.)

† It being doubtful whether, to whom, means Christ, who gave himself for our sins, &c. or God the Father, according to whose will he did it; I have formed the doxology

to both, which is consonant to the use of it in other parts of scripture.

‡ It seems too flat, and low, and assuming in the apostle, and too much abating of the force of his reasoning, to suppose, with some, that he meant only himself, by him that called them; and yet, as he was instrumental in the hand of God therein, and his authority began to work among them, I have taken notice of his concern in that work.

any of you should be so soon in danger, at least, of being turned off from all this to a strange and quite different sort of gospel, as introducing the doctrine of justification to life by the works of the law, together with faith in Christ.

7 Which is not another ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

7 Which, how fond soever some may be of it, is in reality no *gospel* at all ; it being so far from bringing glad tidings of salvation, that it sets the sinner's pardon and acceptance with God, upon impracticable terms ; and so whatever it may be called, it can with no propriety be stiled another *gospel* : I therefore pity those of you that have unwarily embraced it ; and am sensible, that unless ye have been imposed upon by cunning seducers, ye would never have been drawn into it ; but, as I hear, there are some *judaizing* false teachers crept in among, you that by various means distress, shock, and perplex you, and would fain over-turn that blessed gospel, of which Christ is the author, subject, and end, and would make quite another thing of it than it is in truth ; and the better to gain their ends, they suggest as if *Peter*, and the other apostles, and even I myself, preached up the works of the law with faith in Christ, as necessary to justification. (*Chap. ii. 17,—21.*)

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

8 But this is so far from being true, that I am bold to affirm, that whoever he be, suppose it possible that it should be either myself, or any other apostle of Christ, or even an angel come down from heaven ; be he who he will, and let his pretensions be what they will, if he were to publish among you any other system of doctrine for the remission of sins, and for righteousness to eternal life, contrary to that which I at first delivered to you under the inspiration of the Spirit, he should be rejected as one accursed of God, and devoted to destruction.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

9 As I have now already said, I repeat it with deliberation and earnestness, as a matter of the greatest importance, If any one, (*ut sic*) be he man or angel, take upon him to preach up any other scheme of doctrine, which he may falsely call the gospel, but is inconsistent with and subversive of that which ye professed to receive and seemed to embrace with faith and love when I preached to you, he is to be rejected as one abandoned of God, and is to be disdained by you, as well as by him. Though this may sound harsh, and be very offensive to the ears of some that may think it a hard saying ; I am bold to pronounce it, in my Lord and Master's name, that none may dare to pervert his gospel.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God?

10 For as to myself, whatsoever mine enemies may maliciously say against me, Is it now, after I have been

or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.

so long converted and employed in the ministry, and have suffered so many things for Christ? Is it now, after all, my ambition, desire, and aim in my preaching, to persuade people in matters of religion, to receive the doctrine of men, and yield obedience to them? Or, is it not evident, on the contrary, that I therein labour to persuade them to embrace the gospel of God, and yield obedience to him, that he may be glorified? Or, do I make it my business and concern to ingratiate myself with men such as the Jewish zealots, that I may gain their favour and applause, and may avoid their frowns and terrors? No this is far from my intention; I abhor the thought; for if I were still to continue to seek the favour of men, and serve their corrupt humours and designs, as I did in the days of my judaism and unregeneracy, (*Acts* ix. 1, 2.) I should never have listed into the service of Christ; nor should I now be his faithful servant, as I profess and count it my honour, and am above all things else solicitous to approve myself to be.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man:

11 But still further, to satisfy you that I really am so, I assure you, my brethren in the faith, and make it manifest (*πρᾶξις*) by all the signs of apostleship, that the gospel of salvation alone by Jesus Christ, which has been constantly preached by me wherever I have been, is neither formed according to man's natural taste and temper, or for promoting his worldly honour or interests; nor is it owing to the authority, contrivance, or dictates of man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

12 For I neither received my commission to preach it by the intervention of any mere man whatsoever, nor from any of the apostles themselves; nor was I brought to the knowledge of it by any human instruction, but both my authority to preach it, and all my acquaintance with it, were communicated to me by an immediate revelation from him, who is God as well as man, even Jesus Christ himself, and that after his resurrection from the dead, (*ver.* 1.) and exaltation to his heavenly kingdom, which made way for its being set forth in all its fulness and glory.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

13 For ye cannot but have heard abundantly of my former behaviour in my state of judaism, when I was a zealous professor and practiser of that religion, and such a bitter enemy to all that departed from it, that I cruelly persecuted the members of the New Testament-church of the living God, which, in its catholic consideration, consists of the visible professors of Christ's name, wherever they are scattered over the face of the earth; and I was so excessively mad and outrageous against them,

as to bind and drag some of them to prison, and cause others of them to fly their country, others to renounce Christ, and others to be put to death: In this manner I made dreadful havoc among them, and did my utmost to destroy them, root and branch, (*Acts viii. 3. and ix. 1, 2. and xxvi. 10. 11.*) like a furious warrior, when he pursues the flying enemy, and when he storms a town (*ἰδιωκὸν καὶ ἐκράβην*)

14 And profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

14 And at the same time, I was a great proficient in the knowledge and observation of all the religious laws, doctrines, and customs of the *Jews*, even to their most minute rites and ceremonies; and laboured to propagate them beyond most of my years and standing among my own countrymen; being more eminently and remarkably zealous than they generally were, or than is commonly known, for all the traditions of my ancestors, as they have been handed down from one generation to another, whether they were such as were founded in a divine authority, or not. It cannot therefore be reasonably supposed, that so thorough a bigot as I was, should, all at once, abandon my former darling sentiments, temper, and course of life, in which I had been educated and riveted from my childhood up, and should embrace and preach Christ and the gospel, in direct opposition thereunto, and to all my secular interests, without some extraordinary call and divine influence from heaven.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

15 But when God, who of his mere good pleasure, without merit as foreseen in me, (*ἄνευ ἡμῶν*) had set me apart for himself and his service, as he did the prophet *Jeremiah*, (*chap. i. 5.*) before I was born, and at the very time of his bringing me forth out of my mother's womb; and who accordingly afterwards, in the exceeding riches of his sovereign and distinguishing grace, whilst I was going upon a persecuting errand to *Damascus*, called me by an extraordinary miraculous appearance and voice from heaven, and by a powerful irresistible impression upon my heart, to make me both a Christian and a minister, (*Acts ix. 3.—22.*)

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

16 When, I say, it seemed good in his sight, who delights in mercy, to make a clear and full discovery of his dear Son, in all the glory of his person and offices; righteousness, and grace, not only to me, by external declaration, but likewise in me by internal and efficacious illumination, (*2 Cor. iv. 6.*) that I might both know and receive him for the salvation of my own soul, and might preach him to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*; I did not stand to consult the inclinations, ease, and

and comforts of animal nature, which consists of flesh and blood, nor with the dictates of human policy, relating to my worldly honour and interests as a man, or relating to the apparent risks, reproaches, and dangers, that I might be exposed unto by complying with this heavenly call \* ; nor did I advise with any mortal man whatsoever about my duty, in a case which was made so divinely plain to me.

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

17 No, nor did I so much as go up to *Jerusalem* to receive any further instructions or authority from those that were called to the apostleship before me; being entirely satisfied with that immediate light and commission which I had received from the Lord Jesus himself: But having begun my ministry at *Damascus*, where my conversion was publicly known, (*Acts ix. 20.*) I went forthwith † first of all into distant parts to preach Christ to the *Jews*, in the country of *Arabia*, where no apostle had been before me, and I had no opportunity of conversing with any of them; and from thence I returned back to *Damascus*.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

18 Then, three years after God had made this wonderful change upon me ‡, I took a journey to *Jerusalem*, not to increase my knowledge of the gospel, or to have my commission confirmed for preaching it, but only to make a brotherly visit to *Peter*, that great apostle of the circumcision, that I might have the pleasure of conversing a little with him, and of hearing what the Lord had done by his and his brethrens ministry in those parts, and of telling them what he had likewise done by mine in other places, since he had called me by his grace: And *Barnabas* having introduced me to him, and told him how I had seen the Lord in the way, who had spoken to me, and how I had preached boldly at *Damascus* in the name of Jesus, (*Acts ix. 27.*) he readily received me as a faithful disciple and minister of Christ, and I tarried with him no more than fifteen days.

19 But

#### N O T E S.

\* As flesh and blood is a description of mortal man, and the apostle had spoke, (ver. 16.) of his seeking to please not man, but God; his not consulting with flesh and blood, may take in his not being influenced by a regard to human worldly interests, as well as his not advising with men; and so what he here says will be different from what he adds in the next verse, and will help to form a more beautiful gradation, than if we take it to be little more than explicatory of this.

† Though the word immediately is placed (ver. 16.) before I conferred not with flesh and blood, yet, as Mr Locke observes, it prin-

cipally relates to, I went into Arabia, which probably was to preach the gospel, though not mentioned, that being of so importance to his argument, which was to shew that he was completely furnished immediately from Christ himself for his ministerial office, before he had the least communication with any one of the apostles.

‡ This was the first time of the apostle's going to *Jerusalem* since his conversion, which was several years before he became an apostle. (See the notes on *Acts ix. 17.* and *xiii. 3.*)

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God I lie not.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ:

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

19 But I did not so much as see any other of the apostles, except one, who was then at *Jerusalem* likewise; and that was *James* the just, who was brother or kinsman to our Lord Jesus according to the flesh: So that there is no room to imagine that I received my knowledge of the gospel, or my commission to preach it, from the apostolic college.

20 And (as) these things are of great importance for vindicating my character and the doctrine I preach, both of which have been traduced by some among you: Pray observe, I call the great God to witness, and declare with all the solemnity of a religious oath in his penetrating sight, to whom I must one day give an account, that all the facts I am rehearsing to you are strictly true; there is no manner of deceit or falshood in my representation of any of them.

21 After this short visit at *Jerusalem*, I travelled into the provinces of *Syria* and *Cilicia*, some of the brethren at that church attending me in my way thither, as far as *Cesaria*, and sending me from thence to *Tarsus* with the kindest expressions of their care and concern for my safety, (*Acts ix. 30.*) which shewed their approbation of me.

22 But (as) all this while, I was not personally known to any of the other churches of *Judea*, that were joined together in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, as believers in Christ, who professionally, and, in the judgment of charity, really are united to him; and so I cannot be supposed to have gathered my light in the gospel, from them, any more than from the apostles.

23 All the knowledge they had of me was only by accounts which they had received and propagated with admiration and joy among themselves, that the noted *Saul*, who formerly was the bitterest persecutor of the Christians, was now himself a preacher of those doctrines of the gospel which they believed, and which he before did his utmost to suppress; and so is now become a helper of their faith, whom he before endeavoured to destroy for their profession of it.

24 And thereupon they rendered hearty thanks and praises to God for the grace that he had so freely and wonderfully bestowed on me, the chief of sinners: and for the rich advantage that accrued to the cause of Christ, as well as to my own soul, by this merciful and remarkable change that had been wrought in me.



## RECOLLECTIONS.

With what entire satisfaction may we depend upon the divine authority of the gospel, which was delivered by the apostle Paul, who has testified, even upon oath, that he received it, together with his commission to preach it, not from any meer man, but immediately from Jesus Christ, who is God-man ! He is evidently God, as all ministerial, apostolic authority, spiritual blessings, and the whole of the gospel-revelation, proceed jointly and equally from the Father and Him, in distinction from, and in opposition to, all that is derived from men ; and he is as evidently Man, as he died and rose again from the dead : And O how infinitely important and beneficial is his death, who gave himself an atoning sacrifice for our sins, that he might deliver us from them, and from all the evils of this present world, according to the gracious appointment of God our Father ; and whose resurrection is a high demonstration of the acceptableness and efficacy of his death for these great and holy purposes ! On this foot we may comfortably hope for grace and peace from the Father and Son ; and if grace be extended to us, we cannot fail of peace. But with what holy detestation should we reject those that would corrupt the gospel of Christ, and substitute another pretended gospel in its stead, for justification in any other way, than alone through faith in him ! How grievous and astonishing is it, that any, who once seemed to embrace this blessed gospel, should be turned aside from it to some other scheme of doctrine, which in reality is no gospel at all, and never can bring salvation to them ! And how heavy is the curse that lyes upon those that pervert them ! But O, what a wonderful and happy change does the grace of our Lord Jesus make, when it effectually reaches the heart ! It reveals Christ in them that were utter strangers to him before ; and makes them ready to confess the ignorance and error that they formerly gloried in ; it turns the greatest bigots for superstition and human traditions, and the most inveterate enemies to Christ into sincere believers ; it changes the most furious persecutors of his people into true lovers of him and them, and into zealous preachers of that gospel which they before sought to destroy ; and it makes them such faithful servants of Jesus Christ, as no longer seek to please men, by any sinful compliances with them ; and when he calls them to his work, for which he separated them in his own purpose, when they were born, and even before all worlds, they yield obedience to him, without consulting the interests of the flesh, or the opinion of men. And O what matter of thanksgiving and joy is it to his churches, whenever they hear of such monuments being raised to the praise of the glory of his grace, whether they have ever seen their faces or not ! They glorify God for his power and mercy in saving them, and for all the service to his people and cause that is done, and may be further hoped for by them.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle further proves the divine authority of his doctrine and mission by James, Peter and John's owning him and Barnabas, as apostles of the Gentiles, and receiving Titus a Greek into their Christian communion, without his being circumcised, 1, — 10. Gives an account of another interview with Peter at Antioch, where he publicly opposed him for Judaizing, 11, — 14. ; and takes occasion from thence to enter upon this main point in view, relating to justification by faith in Christ, without the works of the law, 15, — 21.*

## TEXT.

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

a And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS a further evidence that my apostolic instructions and commission are immediately from Christ himself, I would add, that I never saw any of the apostles again till eleven years after my forementioned visit to *Peter*, (*chap. i. 18.*) when, \* fourteen years from the time of my conversion, I made a journey to *Jerusalem*, in company with my beloved brother *Barnabas*, my colleague in the apostleship; to the *Gentiles*, (*Acts xv. 2.*) taking *Titus* also, a serious and excellent young man, and minister of Christ, along with me.

2 And I then went up to the church there, not to be taught, or confirmed in my office, by them, or by the apostles that were with them; but on an important occasion relating to the circumcising of the believing *Gentiles*, which some vehemently contended for, as necessary to salvation. (*Acts xv. 1, 5.* See the note there.) And this I did by special direction from the Lord †, to maintain the truth and purity of the gospel, according to the revelation that had been made of it to me: And when I came thither, so far was I from receiving the gospel from them, that (*αὐτοῖς*) I explained it in its full extent to them, setting it forth at large, as I preached it among the idolatrous, as well as other *Gentiles*; and declaring what glorious success God had given me in that work, (*Acts xv. 4, 12.*) But I did this at first only in a private manner to persons of the greatest eminence and influence among them, alone and between ourselves, (see the note on *Acts xv. 3.*) as thinking this to be the most prudent method of proceeding, lest if those of the *Judaizing* party should have had a full and plain account of it before they had been softened by persons of the greatest esteem and reputation among

## NOTES.

\* This was not the apostle's second journey to *Jerusalem*, when, whilst he was praying in the temple, he was in a trance, and saw Christ in person; which he speaks of, *Acts xxii. 17, 18.* and when he probably received his apostolic commission to the *Gentiles*, (see the note on *Acts ix. 17.*) But what he here speaks of is his third journey to *Jerusalem*, which he took with *Barnabas* on occasion of the dispute that had been raised at *Antioch* about circumcising the converted *Gentiles*, *Acts xv. 1, — 4.* which most probably was about fourteen years after his conversion, and consequently but eleven after his first journey thither, mentioned *ch. i. 18.* And though he had been at *Jerusalem* to carry along thither, (*Acts xi. 29, 30.* and *xii. 25.*) between these two journeys, yet, as he then saw none of the apostles, it was need-

less for him to take any notice of it here. (See Dr *Whitby's* note on this verse.)

† By revelation (*κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν*) is understood by some to signify that the apostle went according to the special appointment of God as intimated by the Holy Ghost to the prophets of the church at *Antioch* and to himself, to comply with their desire of his going on their message to *Jerusalem*; but other take it to mean, that in this journey he acted suitable to the revelation which constituted him the apostle of the *Gentiles*, telling the church at *Jerusalem* what things he had done among the *Gentiles* in pursuance of it: (see Dr *Whitby's* note.) And as the construction of the words, and the truth of the fact, may agree to either of these senses, I have given them both a place in the paraphrase.

among them, that would own or countenance me in it, they should have raised furious clamours against me, and by one means or other should have defeated, in some degree at least, the good effect of those services that I had further to carry on among the *Gentiles*; and even of those that I had already been engaged in with happy success, and with great labour, earnestness, and concern, like one that lays himself out to the utmost in running a race.

3 But neither *Titus*, who was with me, being a *Greek*, was compelled to be circumcised:

3 But to shew how stedfastly and openly I stuck to my own principles, and how far I was from going into any thing, either in my preaching or conduct, that looked like encouraging an observation of the *Mosaic* law, as necessary to a man's being justified and saved, I carried *Titus* along with me, as has been said (*ver. 1.*) who, tho' a *Greek*, and so a *Gentile* by birth, was not constrained to be circumcised at his conversion and admission into the ministry; nor when I brought him to the apostles at *Jerusalem*, did any of them insist on his being so.

4 And that he-  
cause of false bre-  
thers unawares  
brought in, who  
came in privily to  
spy out our liber-  
ty which we have  
in Christ Jesus,  
that they might  
bring us into bou-  
dage.

4 And I took this Christian minister along with me, without suffering him to be circumcised, on purpose to bear a public testimony against the erroneous opinion of some of the Pharisaical sect, who pretending to be believers in Christ, had come from *Judea*: and, having been artfully introduced, insinuated themselves among the converts at *Antioch*, (*Acts xv. 1, 5.*) \* under the colour of Christian friends and brethren, that they might have the better opportunity for narrowly inspecting our principles and conduct, and for cavilling against that holy freedom which we are partakers of by Christ the only Saviour; and that they might impose circumcision as a badge and bond of subjection to the *Mosaic* law, as if he had not delivered them that believe in him from that covenant and its curse.

5 To whom we  
preplace by sub-  
stitution, no not for  
their; that the  
truth of the gos-  
pel might conti-  
nue with you.

5 This was such a bold and dangerous insult upon the purity of the gospel-doctrine of justification alone by Christ, through faith in him, that how allowable soever in some cases, and under some considerations, it may be to give way for a time to the weaknesses and prejudices of honest Christians, with regard to the circumcision of *Jewish* converts, (see the note and paraphrase on *Acts xvi. 3.*); yet when the false brethren insisted

#### N O T E.

\* False brethren unawares brought in, is thought by some to be meant of their being brought into the private assembly at *Jerusalem*, (*ver. 1.*) But as here is a manifest re-

ference to what is recorded, *Acts xv. 1, &c.* I rather conceive that the church at *Antioch* is intended.

insisted on *Gentile* believers being circumcised, and so brought under an obligation to keep the whole law of *Moses*, in order to their acceptance with God to eternal life, neither I nor *Barnabas*, (ver. 2.) would by any means yield to them, by consenting to such a subjection to the law, (*οὐκ ἠθέλωμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ*). No, in a case of such vast importance, we would not comply with them in the least, for so much as one hour, or in any one instance whatsoever, that the true doctrine and design of the gospel of the grace of God, relating to justification in his sight, might continue uncorrupted among you, and all the rest of the believing *Gentiles*.

6 But of those who seemed to be somewhat; (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me.

6 But as to those of my fellow apostles, *James*, *Peter*, and *John*, (ver. 9.) who are indeed eminent servants of Jesus Christ, and are highly magnified by your *Judaizing* teachers, as every way to be preferred to me, whatsoever they have been formerly, (*οὐτι*) it does not at all affect my character, nor does it make me a whit better or worse than I should have been, whether they were so great and valuable in themselves, or on your account, or not: That God who called me as well as them, to the apostleship, has no regard to any man's person whatsoever on account of names and parties, or of external privileges and appearances: but reveals his gospel, and gives his commission for preaching it, to whom, and in what way he pleases, as he has in an immediate manner to me, without any assistance from them; for, be they ever so great, I must say that none of them, in the conversation I had with them, contributed any thing to the improvement of my knowledge, beyond what I had learned from Christ before; nor did any of them pretend to find fault with, or go about to correct and mend, what I had preached and done among the *Gentiles*.

7 But, contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto *Peter*:

7 But, on the contrary, when they heard the account, which I and my brother *Barnabas* gave them, of what the Lord had wrought by us among the *Gentiles*, (*Acts* xv. 5, 12.) they plainly perceived that I was intrusted by a divine commission with the ministry of the gospel of salvation to the uncircumcised heathens, as *Peter* was of the same gospel; for the substance of it, to the circumcised *Jews*. (See the note on *Rom.* ii. 26.)

(8 For he that wrought effectually in *Peter* to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the *Gentiles*.)

8 For it appeared by undeniable facts, that the same Lord, who worked effectually in and by *Peter*, and had produced wonders of miracles and of grace, as the seals of his apostolic mission to the circumcised *Jews*; had likewise worked with equal power and efficacy in and by

by me, unto as full and clear a demonstration of my apostolic mission to the uncircumcised *Gentiles*.

8 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

9 And when those famous apostles, *James, Peter, and John*, knew how remarkably God had honoured me with his free favour, in qualifying me for, calling me to, and owning me in my ministry to the *Gentiles*; they who are indeed eminent servants of Christ, and who in the account of mine enemies themselves were esteemed as the principal supporters, maintainers, and defenders of the gospel; they, I say, took me and my fellow-labourer *Barnabas* by the right hand, as a symbol of receiving us into their brotherly affection and communion, and readily owning us as the apostles of Christ; and they agreed, that according to what he had discovered of his mind and will relating to us, we should go on, in his name and strength, preaching to the *Gentiles*, and taking them for our principal province, as we had begun to do before; and that they themselves would persist in preaching to the *Jews*, and taking them for their chief province to carry on the work of Christ among them; and so we cordially wished each other success in the name of the Lord.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

10 Only the three apostles united in their earnest request, that we would be mindful of the necessitous Christians in those perilous days among the *Jews*, to procure charitable contributions for their relief from among the *Gentile* converts, that might be both able and willing to assist them; which was so laudable, compassionate, and needful a work, that whether they had mentioned it or not, I was of my own accord desirous to engage in it, not only from my natural affection to my own countrymen, and from the hearty and impartial love I bear to all Christ's poor, without distinction of parties, for his sake; but likewise from a consideration that the *Gentile* Christians were debtors to the *Jews*, as they received the gospel from them; and so, being made partakers of their spiritual things, ought to minister to them in carnal things, (1 Cor. xv. 26, 27.) By all this it plainly appears, that there was an entire agreement between the other apostles and me at *Jerusalem*; and that they thoroughly approved of my doctrine and commission, as of the same divine authority with their own.

11 But when Peter was come

11 But when afterwards \* *Peter* came to *Antioch*, where

#### N O T E.

\* Some have thought that this was before the council at *Jerusalem*, (Acts xv.) but I rather incline to those that take it to have been after, for the order of the narrative speaks for this; and *Paul* and *Barnabas* certainly went to *Antioch* with the decree of the

council, and continued there preaching the word for sometime afterwards, (Acts xv. 22, 35.) But it does not appear that *Paul* had seen *Peter* more than once before his third journey to *Jerusalem*, which he mentions ver. 1. of this chapter. (See the note there.)

to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

where was the first memorable church of the *Gentile* Christians, (*Acts* xi. 26.) yea, the very church that sent me and *Barnabas* to *Jerusalem*, on the question about the *Gentiles* being obliged to be circumcised, and received an answer in the negative, (*Acts* xv. 1, --- 32.) I knowing myself to be no way inferior in office to him, and finding an inconsistency in his conduct here with his avowed principles at *Jerusalem*, did not go about to reproach him behind his back; but, in faithfulness to my trust, took the liberty to oppose and reprove him personally to his face; because, notwithstanding all his greatness and goodness, he, being left to his own spirit, behaved at such a rate as deserved to be openly discountenanced and condemned †.

11 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the *Gentiles*; but when they were come he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

12 For at his first coming to *Antioch*, before the arrival of some zealous judaizing Christians, that came from the apostle *James*, he knowing his Christian liberty, freely conversed, and sat down to meals in a friendly manner, with the believing *Gentiles*, without any scruple on account of their not being circumcised, or of their different meats and ways of dressing them, that were allowed by the *Mosaic* law: But as soon as those brethren arrived, he temporized so far, as to carry it sly toward the *Gentile* converts, and decline all further converse in a social and familiar manner with them, through his fear of offending those zealots, and raising their prejudices, rage, and outcries against him.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him: insomuch that *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation.

13 And the rest of the *Jewish* Christians at *Antioch*, that had pretty well got over their old prejudices against the believing *Gentiles*, on account of their not being circumcised, were so unhappily misled by *Peter's* behaviour, as to follow his steps under feigned pretences of its being unlawful; or at least inexpedient to associate freely with them. And as a bad example in the greatest and best of men is, of all others, the most ensnaring and defiling to those that have a good opinion of them; so even *Barnabas* himself, though he was an excellent Christian and apostle of the *Gentiles*, was carried away with the stream, and under the power

of

#### N O T E.

\* As what the apostle writes, in this and the three following verses, is admirably suited to his purpose, for supporting his authority, as equal to that of *Peter* himself; so it gives us a flagrant proof against the popish pleas for the supremacy of *Peter* and his pretended successors; and shews, that the apostles themselves were neither infallible nor impeccable, any further than they were under the immediate conduct and influence of the Holy Ghost: But this no way affects the

rule of faith, which we have in the written word of God, and which faithfully condemns such things in the apostles themselves, as proceeded from their own spirit, and not from the Spirit of God, that we might not be misled by them, and might be assured that, where no such intimation is given, and nothing of that kind appears from the nature of things, we may safely depend on the divine authority of what they said and did (See the note on 1 Cor. vii. 10.)

of temptation and remaining corruption, was likewise drawn by specious pretences, contrary to his own judgment, to fall in with this pernicious scheme.

13 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

14 But when, in reflection on their conduct, I perceived that, in this particular, they did not act up to the simplicity and godly sincerity of the Christian character, nor regularly trace, with a right foot, (see *Exod. xvi.*) or behave correspondent to the true spirit and design of the gospel-doctrine of justification alone by Christ; my soul was filled with holy indignation: and applying myself personally to *Peter*, as the ringleader in this dangerous sort of double-dealing, I said to him publicly, in the presence of *Barnabas* and all the *Judizers*, by way of caution and rebuke to them as well as him, and of confirmation to the believing *Gentiles*, Since you, who are yourself originally a *Jew*, think proper, and make no scruple, on some occasions, to converse with, and conform to the customs of the *Gentiles*, without respect to any distinction of nations or meats, or regard to the prohibitions of the law of *Moses* about them; and since you do not always confine yourself to the ceremonial customs of the *Jews*, how unreasonable, injurious and self-condemning is it in you, by this your refusing for fear of the *Jews* to converse or eat with the *Gentiles*, to entice and influence them, that never were under the law, to go into an observation of it after the manner of the *Jews*, as if they could not otherwise be accepted of God? How absurd and contrary to the truth of the gospel is this!

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

15 For we *Peter, Barnabas, Paul* and other believers, who are *Jews* by birth, and as such were counted an holy people, and trained up under the instructions and obligations of the *Mosaic* law, and were not sinners of the *Gentile* race, who were always utter strangers to that law, and looked upon as the most profligate and abandoned wretches;

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall

16 We, I say, when God came to work effectually upon us by his Spirit, were fully convinced, that no man can be acquitted from condemnation, and accepted of God as righteous, by his performances of the works of the law, in any view or consideration of them whatsoever, but that this benefit is to be obtained merely through faith in Christ on account of that perfect righteousness which he has wrought out in conformity and satisfaction to the holy and broken law; even we, (who stood upon better terms for life than the *Gentiles*) being made thoroughly sensible of this, have been induced to believe in Christ, as the only Saviour, for this very end

shall no flesh be justified.

and purpose, that we might be justified unto eternal life, entirely and alone through faith, as apprehending and receiving him, and not at all, neither in whole nor in part, by our own performances of the deeds of the law. And there was an absolute necessity for our taking this course, as ever we would not miscarry in an affair of such vast importance; (much more must it be so for the *Gentiles*, who have still less pretences than we had, to depend upon their own works;) for considering the strict demands of the law, and the great and many defects that are found in the best of us, it is impossible that *any man living*, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*, should be justified by his obedience to its moral, and much less to its ceremonial precepts, or by any personal righteousness of his own \*, as the scripture itself assures us, (*Pf. cxliii. 2.*)

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

17 But if, whilst in this manner, we, in a way of believing, seek for justification alone by what Christ has done and suffered in our room and stead, which is the proper meaning of what I call being justified by the faith of Christ, (*ver. 16.*); If at the same time we ourselves are found to be under guilt and condemnation, as unpardoned and accursed sinners, which is the case with all those that are under the law, (*chap. iii. 10. and Rom. iii. 19.*); shall we therefore say, that, after all that Christ has revealed about the way of salvation, and has wrought in us by his Spirit to make us renounce all expectations of being justified by the law, he is the author of a dispensation, which, instead of bringing in righteousness to eternal life, leaves us under the guilt of sin, and consequently under its power, to be dealt with as transgressors †? Detestable thought! Far be it from ever entering into my mind.

18 For

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle's citing this passage of scripture, in proof that they could not be justified by the works of the law, shews that he included the works of the moral, as well as of the ceremonial law; for David undoubtedly did so when he said, (*Psal. cxliii. 2.* the place here referred to) *In thy sight shall no man living be justified*: and our apostle alleging it in the same argument, *Rom. iii. 19, 20.* explains it, as relating to the law, in such a manner, as can agree to none but the moral law; for he there speaks of it as the law, by which *the whole world is become guilty before God, and by which is the knowledge of sin.* (See the note there.)

† There is the greatest difficulty in fixing the determinate sense of this verse; but the interpretation given in the paraphrase seems

to fall in directly with the whole tenor of the apostle's argument; and the only objection, as I conceive, against it is, that a *minister of sin*, according to the genuine sense of that expression, signifies one that *countenances* or *some way contributes to it*: But this idea will be included, if we consider that *unpardoned sin* is always *reigning sin*, and its guilt being charged upon us, subjects us to its power and dominion; and so if we are really unjustified, while we seek and profess to be justified by Christ, we, in effect, are still under the power of sin; and if Christ's doctrine of justification alone by him leaves us in that state, he thereby, instead of delivering us from sin, the more effectually binds it upon us.



18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I thro' the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

18 For if I again go about to set up the righteousness of the law for justification before God, after I had renounced all regard to it for that purpose, which is like a foolish builder erecting the same sort of house that he had pulled down as insufficient to answer his end, I should grievously offend against God and my own conscience, by falling from the doctrine of grace, (*chap. v. 4.*) and defeating my own design in believing on Christ alone for justification; and should reduce myself again to a state of guilt and condemnation, which, according to the tenor of the law, must be the case of every one that has transgressed it. (*Chap. iii. 10.*) But this I can never be persuaded to do.

19 For by the deep sense I have of the spirituality, extent and strictness of the law in its demands for justification, and of God's design to convince of sin, and not to justify the sinner by it, I am quite taken off from, and dead to all my former expectations of righteousness to eternal life by it, (*Rom. vii. 9, 10.*); and now see that I am discharged from the *Mosaic* law, as a covenant of works, that I might live in a state of favour and acceptance with God, through the righteousness of Christ in whom I have believed for this very purpose\*; and that being divorced from the law as my first husband, and married to Christ, I might live upon better principles, to better ends, and under new obligations, in all holiness to God, according to the unchangeable rule of obedience, which he has laid down in the law. (*Rom. vii. 1,—6.*)

20 I, in this manner, am crucified to the law, or, which is much the same thing, the law is crucified to me, as to all expectations of life, or possibility of attaining it by any personal obedience to its precepts; I have entirely done with it for any such purpose though, and together with, and by virtue derived from Christ, who was crucified to bear its curse, and cancel its obligation as a covenant: Nevertheless, whilst I am in this sense dead to the law, I am brought into a state of justification to life, and am enabled on that foundation to bring forth living fruits of righteousness to God; yet this life, in either of these considerations of it, is not owing to any thing in myself, but only to Christ, who lives

## N O T E.

\* I think interpreters, by having generally dropped the notion of living to God, in a state of pardon and acceptance with him, in this and the following verse, lose sight of the apostle's main argument, as if it had no concern here, and make the connection of the

last verse with these very abrupt; and therefore I have brought into view the life or justification, as well as of sanctification and holiness, in this part of the apostle's reasoning.

lives as a head of righteousness, and a head of influence in me, by virtue of my union with him; so that it is not so much I that live, as Christ that lives in me; and the life of pardon and acceptance with God and for his glory, to which I am now restored, and according to which I continue to live and act, whilst I am here in the body, is not by the works of the law, nor according to the dictates of the flesh, but only by that faith, which renounces every thing of self, and carries me out to the eternal Son of God, as relying entirely upon him, and deriving all vital influence from him, who, in the greatness of his endearing, matchless, and distinguishing grace, without any desert in myself, loved me, and freely gave himself up to the worst of deaths to make a complete atonement for my sin \*, and to redeem me from its power, and from the wrath to come, and entitle me to eternal life.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

21 In all this I stick close to my evangelical principles, I do not, I dare not, I would not be so ungrateful, as to despise, reject, or make void (*καταργέω*) the gospel of grace, the love of Christ, and the free favour of God in giving him for us, and accepting us as righteous through faith in him, as they do who plead for justification by the works of the law †: For if righteousness to eternal life were to be wrought out by our obedience to the law, under any consideration of it whatsoever, there would then have been no need of his dying to discharge us from condemnation, and entitle us to life; and so the grace of God, which appears in his death, answers no purposes of this kind, that might not have been answered without it; nay, if the law bears any part in our justification, his death was insufficient of itself for it, and *grace is no more grace.* (Rom. xi. 6.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what remarkable prudence did the great apostle, gradually and seasonably, communicate the gospel of Christ in all its extent, light, and glory; first to persons of chief esteem, rank, and influence, in the church, that, being countenanced by them, it might have the easier access to the prejudiced minds of others, and that he might not lose the great end of his ministry, in which he laboured for the salvation of immortal souls! With what faithfulness did he, together with all his prudence, stick to his evangelical principles, and execute his commission, in not suffering Titus to be circumcised, when an ill use was likely to be made of it, to the subverting of the gospel! And with what evidence did he support the divine authority of his office, as equal to that of Peter, or of any other

### N O T E S.

\* The apostle's saying so emphatically, and with appropriation, Christ *loved me, and gave himself for me*, intimates, that he looked upon this as a peculiar favour to him, in distinction from the bulk of mankind, and particularly from those that were stran-

gers to his living in them.

† The reason which the apostle here gives against justification by the works of the law, is of equal force in every consideration of them; and therefore is not to be restrained to the works of the ceremonial law.

other apostles ! Accordingly, James, Peter, and John, neither of which claimed a superiority over the other, upon hearing with what glorious efficacy Christ had exerted his power in and by him, could not but embrace him with the affection of brethren ; and while they could add nothing to the revelation, or the commission which he had received, they cheerfully agreed, that he and Barnabas should go on with their work principally among the Gentiles, wishing them prosperity in the name of the Lord ; and that they themselves would mostly continue to preach the same gospel to the Jews. And Paul, to shew his affection to Jewish converts, without distinction of parties, was as willing to do what in him lay for the relief of their poor, as their own apostles could wish him to be. But, alas ! how far may the best of God's servants and people be suffered, under the power of temptation, to act unbecomingly the sincerity of their Christian character, and injuriously to the true gospel of Christ ! Witness Peter, Barnabas, and many other believing Jews. And how dangerous are great examples, when they take a wrong turn ! Whatsoever therefore any man's authority, reputation, or pretences be, an unworthy behaviour is to be detested and opposed in them, as well as in persons of lower character ; and they who publicly offend, should be as publicly rebuked, that others may hear and fear. And with what earnestness, zeal, and holy boldness, should gospel ministers, and Christians too, contend for the pure doctrine of justification alone by Christ, through faith in him, in opposition to justification by any works of the law ! Their own experience, under the saving convictions and operations of the Spirit, leads them to believe in Christ alone for this purpose, as knowing that they were before in a state of condemnation, and that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified. They, by their insight into the true nature and design of the law itself, are dead to all expectations of being justified by it, that they may look for this benefit alone from Christ, through his atoning blood and sacrifice ; and may live by faith on him for it, and for quickening and sanctifying influence to enable them to live in all holy obedience to God, according to the everlasting rule of righteousness, as contained in the moral law. This is indeed not so much their own living, as Christ's living in them : And to take any other course for seeking acceptance with God, and effectual influence for living to him, is to go about to build what they themselves had before destroyed, and to subject them to a state of guilt and condemnation, as sinners whom the law can never justify ; and it is to render the free grace of God, and the meritorious death of Christ useless, and of none effect : But O how delightful is it, when the believer can make a personal claim to Christ, and say on good grounds, He loved me, and gave himself for me !

### C H A P. III.

*The apostle reproves, and warmly expostulates with the Galatians for their folly, in departing from the great doctrine of justification alone through faith in Christ, 1,—5. ; establishes this doctrine from the example of Abraham's justification, 6,—9, from the tenor of the law, and the severity of its curse, from which believers are redeemed by Christ, that they might be blessed with Abraham, 10,—14. from the stability of the covenant of promises made with him, which the law could not disannul, and from the inconsistency of justification by the free promise, and by the law, 15,—18. He nevertheless shews that the law had its use, as it was given to sinners among the Jews to convince them of their need of a Saviour, and was a school-master to lead them to Christ, 19,—25. ; and that under the gospel-state true believers are, without distinction of nations, or of external circumstances, all one in Christ, and heirs of Abraham's blessings, 26,—29.*

## TEXT.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

## PARAPHRASE.

O H, ye thoughtless, inconsiderate, stupid *Galatians!* (*αἰετοί*) I would not reproach you; but my heart is moved with tender compassion toward you, and with holy zeal for the purity of the gospel; which is corrupted among you: By what artful insinuations and stratagems has Satan, or any false teacher, as his instrument, so far insatuated you, as to prevent your continuing to adhere, and yield yourselves up to the true gospel-doctrine of justification alone by Jesus Christ, through faith in him, (*chap. ii. 16.*) who in his sufferings and death has been in as lively and affecting a manner represented, and as it were painted out among you, in the preaching of the gospel, and in the administration of the Lord's supper, as if ye had actually seen him hanging upon the cross with your bodily eyes, and the design of whose crucifixion, to deliver you from the law, as a covenant of works has been clearly opened to you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

2 Let me only ask you this fair and plain question, to convince you of your prodigious folly and madness herein; Were ye made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (which so many of you were endued with in his miraculous gifts, and I would charitably hope in his graces too) by the ministration of the law, or on account, or by means of any works performed by you in obedience to that ministration of death and condemnation? (*2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.*) or, on the contrary, was it not by means of your hearing and embracing the doctrine of faith in Christ alone for justification, even that word of faith which we preach, and is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness? (*Rom. x. 8. and 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9.*) Which of these is it that God has owned with such remarkable tokens of his favour and acceptance? The fact evidently proves, and ye must surely acknowledge, that it was not by the first, but by the last of these dispensations; especially considering that many of you never so much as heard of the law of *Moses*, till after ye were converted from your *Gentilism*.

3 Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

3 Having then set out so happily and hopefully in your Christian course, under the light and influence of the Spirit, with faith in Christ for all acceptance to eternal life, according to the tenor of the gospel; how surprisingly stupid and irrational is it, for any of you to imagine, that your justification is to be compleated by your own obedience to the law, which may be termed *flesh* in opposition to the gospel, as it is destitute of the Spirit, (*2 Cor. iii. 6,—8.*) and a man is bound to obey the

whole

whole of it by the fleshly ordinance of circumcision, (*Gal. v. 3.*); as its ceremonial rites sanctify only to the purifying of the flesh, (*Heb. ix. 13.*); and as seeking justification by any works of the law is pleasing to the flesh, is taught by the wisdom of the flesh, and gratifies the pride of corrupt nature, in giving it occasion of assuming glory to itself? (*Rom. iv. 2.*) But all this is so far from perfecting, that it is directly subversive of the gospel-doctrine, in this grand article of it.

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

4 And as ye have suffered a great deal of persecution, by the instigation of your adversaries the *Jews*, for your profession of this very doctrine; how preposterously weak and foolish has your submitting to so many hardships on that account been, without any manner of spiritual benefit to yourselves? If after all (which God forbid) ye should apostatize; and so both your profession and sufferings should prove to be unprofitable and vain.

5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, saith he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

5 To return therefore to my argument, (*ver. 2*) whether ye consider Christ as the author \*, or me as only the instrument, of communicating to some of you at least, such gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, as are tokens of God's accepting you; and of such wonderful miracles as are a divine attestation to the truth of the gospel; are these powerful and gracious effects produced under the influence of Christ's Spirit, by means of my preaching, or of your doing, the works of the law, in order to your justification? It is evident that there can be no pretence of this kind. Or were these favours conferred upon you, by means of your hearing and embracing the doctrine of faith in Christ, as alone sufficient to answer that end? They certainly were: and this is a testimony from God, that your justification is no way owing to the law, but only to Christ, through faith in him.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

6 Even as it was in the case of *Abraham*, (*Gen. xv. 1, 5, 6.*) that eminent father of the faithful whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, (*ver. 28. 29.*) who gave credit to, and rested upon the promise which God made to him of the *Messiah*, (*ver. 8, 16.*) and what he apprehended, and believed in the promised Saviour for, was imputed to him for righteousness unto justification. (See the note on *Rom. iv. 3.*)

7 Know ye therefore, that they

7 Be ye therefore assured, that they who are true believers in Christ, according to the promises, as that great patriarch

#### N O T E.

\* He that ministers or supplies (*οἰκονομεῖ*) may relate either to Christ, who was mentioned, (*ver. 1.*) or to the apostle himself, though he in modesty concealed his own

name; and both are introduced into the paraphrase in a manner suitable to the different concernment that Christ and the apostle had in the things here mentioned.

they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident: for, The just

patriarch was, are in a spiritual sense the true children of Abraham, whom God owns and accepts as such, that they may be blessed together with him.

8 And as there is but one way of any sinner's being justified; so the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration the scriptures of the Old Testament were written, foreseeing that God designed in due time to justify the idolatrous *Gentiles*, as well as others, only through faith in Christ, intimated it long before-hand, even before the institution of circumcision, and the giving of the law, by the glad tidings of salvation which he published in his promise to Abraham, saying, (*Gen. xii. 3.*) *In thee*, meaning *in thy seed*, as it is afterwards explained, (*chap. xxii. 18.*) i. e. thro' the obedience and sufferings of the *Messiah*, who will descend from thy loins, shall persons of all nations, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, be graciously accepted of God, and blessed with all spiritual and eternal blessings.

9 From hence therefore it plainly follows, that they, who are partakers of a true and lively faith in Christ, and seek to be justified merely on his account, whatsoever their character and condition had been before, are blessed together with, and as effectually as, believing Abraham himself, that famous friend of God; which they could never be by virtue of their own personal obedience to the law.

10 For all mankind being sinners, as many of them as are under the law-covenant, and are such abettors of its works, as to look for pardon, justification, and salvation by, and for what they can do in conformity to it, are so far from being blessed, that they are under a sentence of condemnation to misery and death: For so strict and severe is the law-tenure in its moral demands, that it absolutely condemns for every failure, insomuch that it is written, with regard to all that are under it, (*Deut. xxvii. 26.*) The curse of God, which is the declaration of his wrath in the law, stands in force against every one, and binds him over to deserved punishment who does not personally, universally, and perfectly continue at all times, in thought, word, and deed, through the whole course of his life, to observe and perform every precept that is recorded in the book of the law, without the least flaw or defect by any sin of omission or commission whatsoever.

11 But it is still further evident, that no man is or can be justified on account of his own obedience to the law, at the bar of the just and holy God, whose penetrating eye observes every sinful motion of the heart,

just shall live by  
faith.

as well as the action of the life : For he has appointed another way for the justification of sinful men as appears from an express declaration of his will in his word, where he says, (*Heb. ii. 4.*) The man who is accounted righteous before God, shall be delivered from law-condemnation, and brought into a state of life and salvation ; and shall continue to live in that state of favour and acceptance, through Jesus Christ and his righteousness, by means of his faith in him, till it be crowned with eternal life, (*Rom. i. 17.* see the note and paraphrase there.)

12 And the law  
is not of faith :  
but, The man  
that doth them  
shall live in them.

12 And it is certain, that the way prescribed for justification in the law is not by faith ; but the terms which it has fixed for that purpose are, that the man who perfectly answers all its demands, by doing every thing which it enjoins, he, and none but he, shall be acquitted from condemnation, and entitled to life by it ; so that unless his obedience to the law be perpetual, sinless, and without defect, which is impossible to any man in his present fallen state, he is so far from being able to obtain a title to life by the tenor of the law, that he cannot free himself from its curse.

13 Christ hath  
redeemed us from  
the curse of the  
law, being made  
a curse for us :  
for it is written,  
Cursed is every  
one that hangeth  
on a tree.

13 But Christ, in the greatness of his love, and by the merit of his death, (*ἀνταρραβή*) has bought us, who believe in him, out of the hands of justice ; and so by the price of his own precious blood, has delivered us from all that wrath and punishment which is summed up and threatened in the curse of the law, as the due desert of sin ; he having, by God the Father's appointment, come under the sentence and execution of the law, in our room and stead, when he hung, like the vilest of criminals, on the cross, as is intimated by the very nature of that kind of death, and his being *delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*, to suffer it, (*Acts ii. 23.*) ; for this sort of death was not only the most infamous of all others among the Romans, but is stigmatized in the *Mosaic* law itself, where it is written, (*Deut. xxi. 23.*) with a typical view to the crucifixion of Christ, Every one that is hanged on a tree, is to be deemed as forsaken of God and devoted to death, according to the utmost rigour of the law against the most execrable offenders that are condemned as guilty in its eye.

14 That the  
blessing of Abra-  
ham might come  
on the Gentiles  
through Jesus  
Christ ; that we  
might receive the  
pro-

14 Our blessed Lord, with amazing condescension and compassion to us, submitted in this manner to bear and take away the curse of the law from us, that instead of its being executed upon us, according to our deserts, the blessing of righteousness to justification and life,

promise of the  
Spirit through  
faith.

life, (*ver.* 11, 21.) which was conferred on *Abraham*, and was promised to him for his covenant-seed, that should claim under Christ, in whom all nations were to be blessed, might he freely vouchsafed, even to believing sinners of the *Gentiles*, through the only Saviour, who should descend from his loins; and particularly that we, who live under the gospel-dispensation, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, might receive the promised Spirit in a plentiful communication of his gifts, graces, and comforts, as the pledge and token of our title to the eternal inheritance, and as a testification of it to our consciences, not for, or on account of any works of our own, but merely through faith in him who purchased this blessing for us.

13 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.

15 To illustrate this point, my brethren, by a plain and familiar example taken from the common practice of all nations in their civil affairs, and by language that men are well acquainted with: We know from the nature of a covenant of promises, like that to *Abraham*, that if it be but an engagement made by such mutable and short-sighted creatures as men, who may afterwards change their minds, and find some unforeseen inconveniences attending it; yet if it be once duly ratified, by its being signed and sealed, it is not lawful for any one, without the consent of the covenanter, to alter it, either by cancelling and making it void, on one hand; or by adding new articles to it, as the self-justificaries and legatists of this day would do by the covenant of grace, on the other.

16 Now to *Abraham* and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

16 Now, to apply this to the case before us, the covenant that I have given a hint of, (*ver.* 8, 9, 14.) relating to the way of our being accepted of God as righteous, consisted of a free promise, which, because of its vast comprehension of blessings, and of its being first made to *Abraham*, and afterwards repeated to him, and to *Isaac*, (*Gen.* xii. 3. and xii. 18. and xvi. 4.) may be called the *promise*, and which the all-wise and unchangeable God himself, who cannot lie, made, not to the father of the faithful only, but to him and his seed: And to shew that this was meant of one particular sort of seed, God did not say that he gave this covenant of promises to *Abraham*, and to his seeds in the plural number, as if he meant all his natural, as well as spiritual children, or such of his fleshly posterity as should seek to be justified upon any other foot than that of the covenant made with him, as well as with those that walk in the steps of his faith, (*Rom.* iv. 12.); yet God, in a way of promise to his seed, spoke in the singular



singular number, which was primarily meant of *Christ* himself, as to descend from him, not through the loins of *Ismael*, but of *Isaac*, who was the child of the promise; and so represented the true children of *Abraham*, that should be accounted his spiritual seed, and should be reckoned to *Christ*, and claim under him, as members of his mystical body, thro' faith in him. (*Rom. ix. 7, 8.*) \*

17 And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in *Christ*, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

17 Thus therefore I argue; This covenant of promises, which was made with a view to *Christ*, (*ut Christus*) and was to receive its final confirmation by his blood, having been before-hand ratified by God in him, and with relation to him, who is the head, mediator, surety and substance of it, and who, according to the assurance then given to *Abraham*, should spring from his loins, as that *Messiah* in whom his spiritual seed of all nations should be blessed; this covenant, I say, being confirmed by God's own word of promise, (*Gen. xii. 3.*) by the seal of circumcision, and his accomplishment of one leading part of the promise in the birth of *Isaac*, (*ch. xvii. 4, 10, 15, 19. and xxi. 2.*) and by his oath, (*ch. xxii. 16,—18.*) the law of *Moses*, which was not given till † four hundred and thirty years, (*Ex. xii. 40.*) after this great promise was made, could not in any consistency with the wisdom and faithfulness of God, invalidate it, and destroy its effect; so as to supersede it, and introduce another way of justification and salvation than that which this promise related to: This plainly shews, that a right and title to eternal life cannot be obtained by the works of the law, but only thro' faith in *Christ*.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to *Abra-*

18 For if a title to the heavenly inheritance, typified by that of the land of *Canaan*, is obtained by virtue of any works done in obedience to the law, it is no longer the matter of a free promise; since works and grace,

18

#### NOTES.

\* The seed, which is *Christ*, is understood by some to mean our Lord himself personally, as descended from *Abraham*; and by others *Christ* mystically, as comprehending all his spiritual seed, or those that believe in him, who, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are in a covenant-sense *Abraham's* seed, and heirs according to the promise, (*ver. 29.*) And as I think both may be included, the paraphrase introduces both; though it seems, as if the primary reference were to *Christ* personally considered.

† The usual computation of four hundred and thirty years is from the time that the promise was first made to *Abraham* at the age of seventy-five years, (*Gen. xii. 5, 4.*) from

thence to the birth of *Isaac*, *Abraham* being then an hundred years old, (*Gen. xxi. 5.*) was twenty-five years; from thence to the birth of *Jacob* was sixty years, (*Gen. xlv. 26.*) from thence to *Jacob's* going into *Egypt* was an hundred and thirty years, (*Gen. xlvii. 9.*) and from thence to *Israel's* deliverance out of *Egypt* was two hundred and fifteen years, which, added to the foregoing numbers, make four hundred and thirty years, which, according to the *Seventy*, (*Exod. xii. 40.*) was the whole time of their sojourning in *Egypt*, and before in the land of *Canaan*. (See *History* on the place, *Bedford's Chronology*, pag. 293. and *Universal Hist.* p. 422. fol.

Abraham by promise.

in this consideration of them, are directly opposite. (*Rom. xi. 6.*) but it is evident, that God gave it (*ἐπαγγελίαν*) to Abraham and his seed, not through the law, but by a merely gratuitous, free, and absolute promise, through the righteousness of faith, that it might be sure to all his spiritual seed, of what nature soever they be. (*Rom. iv. 13, 16.*)

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

19 Some then may, perhaps, object and say, If it be so, to what end or purpose was the *Mosaic* law delivered to the *Israelites* at all? to this I answer, It was afterwards annexed to the promise, not for bringing in a new way of justification, but in subserviency to the great design of the promise itself, that as they were sinners, and obnoxious as such, to divine wrath, as well as the rest of mankind, it might be a means of discovering, as well as restraining sin, of convincing them of their guilt and danger, (*Rom. iii. 20. and iv. 15. and v. 20.*) and of their need of such a gracious promise; and might put them upon looking to Christ and his atoning sacrifice, (*ver. 24.*) till he at length should come into the world, who was, by way of eminence, that seed of Abraham, to whom the promise principally referred, and in whom believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as the true children of Abraham, should be united, and gathered into one body under him, as their head, *who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*, (*Rom. x. 4.*); and this law was not given to *Israel*, like the promise to Abraham and his seed, immediately from God himself; but it was conveyed by the ministry of angels (see the paraphrase on *Acts vii. 53.*) to *Moses*, and delivered into his hand, as the representative of that people, and as a typical Mediator, who stood between God and them, (*Lev. xvi. 46. and Deut. v. 5.*) to remind them of their need of the promised Saviour to perform this office effectually for them.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.

20 Now a mediator, as the very term signifies, is a friend that interposes between two parties, and is not to transact merely with and for one of them to the exclusion of the other: But God, from whom the law was delivered to *Israel* by the hand of *Moses*, is only one of the parties concerned in the promise unto Abraham and his spiritual seed of all nations, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and therefore as *Gentile* believers were included in that promise, and neither they, nor their representatives were present at the making of the *Sinai* covenant, nor were concerned in that which was made only with the natural seed of Abraham; this transaction between God and the *Jews* could not vacate the antecedent;

antecedent, free and absolute promise, which extended likewise to the *Gentiles*; and indeed he is *one God, who justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith*, (Rom. iii. 20.) and is one and the same \*, immutably faithful to his word of promise, and to them that trust in him according to it.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

21 Is the law then, in this way of stating things, really opposite in its design, as *Jewish* zealots would suggest, to the free promise, which was given to *Abraham* and his seed, and is drawn out with greater perspicuity and glory under the gospel-state? No, by no means; far be it from us to imagine any such inconsistency and contrariety in God's own dispensations; there is no room for such a thought; one being given to subserve the other, and not that we might be justified by one, as well as by the other: For had there been any law enacted, that could have entitled a fallen creature to life, on condition of his performing the obedience it required, it is certain that God would have spared his own Son, that eminently promised seed of *Abraham*; and righteousness for justification to eternal life should have consisted in a conformity to that law †.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

22 But, on the contrary, the sacred scripture of the Old Testament, in its general tenor, hath pronounced upon all mankind, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* in their fallen state, that they are sinners, (Rom. iii. 9,—23. See the note there,) and hath shut them up together, (*συμπερικλείει*) as in a prison, under a sentence of condemnation, and incapacity of satisfying for their past offences, or rendering themselves acceptable to God for time to come, by any obedience of their own; and all this is declared, to the end that there might be no room for any to seek, or expect to be justified, by their own works; but that the free promise of pardon, life and salvation thro' faith in Christ, which he is both the object and author of, might take place, and be graciously fulfilled to every one that believes in him.

23 But before faith came we were

23 But as we are naturally strangers and enemies to this important truth, and it was but obscurely intimated

#### NOTES.

\* The various senses I have given of God here, are very consistent with the apostle's scope; though, perhaps, the first of them might be most immediately intended. (See Mr Locke's note.)

† A law, and by the law, (*νόμος* and *ἐκ νόμου*) in the latter part of the verse, are without the article; and therefore, according to Mr Locke's rule of interpretation, (see his note on Rom. ii. 14.) they relate to law in general; and the apostle here opposes, the

promise by faith of Jesus Christ, and our being justified by faith, to our attaining life by a law, i. e. by our own personal obedience to any law, which shews that attaining justification to life through faith, is not through faith as an act of obedience to any supposed law, but as it lays hold on Christ for eternal life, and on the free promise in and through him. (See the notes on Rom. i. 17. and iv. 3.)

were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

ted under former dispensations; so till Christ, the object of faith †, and the doctrine of justification and salvation, thro' faith in him, came to be fully manifested by the gospel, and till we accordingly were brought to believe in him; even those of us that were educated in the *Jewish* religion, were preserved indeed under the *Mosaic* law from joining with the idolatrous rites of other nations; but were held (*ερρημικῶς*) like captives in ward, under its commanding and condemning sentence, and were all shut up together (*συναχθῆναι*) as criminals inclosed in prison under a sense of guilt, and obnoxiousness to wrath; and yet reserved to be trained up by degrees under the discipline of the law unto the receiving of Christ, and the doctrine of faith in him, which was afterwards to be revealed with the clearest evidence under a new dispensation of light and grace, vastly exceeding all that had ever gone before it.

24 Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

24 We are therefore to consider the use of the whole religious law of *Moses*, under the notion of a school-master's office in the education of youth, to bring us up for Christ, and to direct and lead us, like children, (*παιδαγωγός*) during our state of nonage, to him, as, by the strictness of its *moral* precepts, and the severity of its curse, it shewed us our sin and danger, the insufficiency of our own righteousness, and our need of such a perfectly righteous and atoning Saviour as Christ is; and as, by its *ceremonial* rites and typical sacrifices, it both carried a conviction of our own guilt and defilement, and pointed out his death and sufferings to us, that we might learn to quit all dependence on our own performances of the deeds of the law, in any view of them whatsoever for justification, and might seek to obtain it alone thro' faith in the meritorious obedience and sacrifice of the Messiah.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master.

25 But now, after Christ, the object of faith, and the doctrine of justification by faith in him, is made fully manifest under the gospel-state, and we ourselves are brought to believe in him for righteousness to eternal life, we are got beyond that dispensation, and are no longer, like minors, in a state of ignorance, weakness and servile fear under the severe pedagogy of the law, to drive us by its terrors to Christ, and to shadow him out to us by its obscure types, as one that should come to deliver us from sin and wrath.

26 For

#### N O T E.

† In this and the next verse but one, *faith* seems to be put for the *object*, or the *doctrine* of faith. And yet, as we are made partakers

of saving benefits only by believing, it may be proper to take the *act* of faith likewise into the interpretation.

16 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

26 For all of you, my brethren, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, that have believed in Christ alone for justification, according to the tenor of the gospel, are taken into God's family, not merely as children in their non-age, but as sons and heirs, that are advanced from minority to mature age \*, and are admitted to higher privileges than were formerly enjoyed, even all the blessings that belong to an evangelical adoption, thro' faith in the anointed Saviour, who is already come, and has actually obtained eternal redemption for you. (*Heb. ix. 12.*)

17 For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.

27 For as many of you, as have been baptized in the name of Christ, and into the faith and profession of him, who has appointed that ordinance to be the initiating visible seal of the covenant of grace under the New Testament, as circumcision was under the Old; I mean such of you, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as are likewise answerable to its signification, partakers of saving benefits by spiritual union with Christ, ye have put him on, not in profession only, but in reality by faith, as the Lord your righteousness, and are, as it were, all over covered with Christ, as a man is with his garments, and so there is no need of your being circumcised, in order to your acceptance with God, who looks upon you in Christ as one with him, and as the children of God arrived at adult age, through faith in him, (*ver. 26.*)

18 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

28 There is now no distinction of nations, ranks or sexes, with respect to gospel-acceptance, privileges and blessings; no difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*, or master and servant, or male and female; there is no prerogative or preference of one above another, on account of any external circumstances, as there was in former dispensations: For the grace of God is so enlarged under the gospel-state, that all of you, who are true believers, whatever your religious or civil characters have been, are one holy body in Christ, who is equally and alike the head of every one of you, for all spiritual and saving purposes; and therefore circumcision, which was peculiar to males, and designed to keep up a distinction between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is of no further use in the church of Christ.

29 And

#### N O T E.

\* Since believers under the Old Testament were really the children of God, as well as those under the New, the apostle's argument requires, that he be here understood to speak of such children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, as are not in a state of minority but of adult age; and so are freed from the bondage

to, or discipline of the law; and are admitted to the free use of their own inheritance, according to the liberty of gospel-privileges, which Old Testament-believers were strangers to, as he explains himself at large, *ch. iv. 1,—7.*

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

29 And if ye be really united to Christ, as his living members, and interested in him and devoted to him, then are ye, tho' uncircumcised in the flesh, and of *Gentile* race, the true children of *Abraham* in a covenant sense; and so are heirs according to the promise which was made to him and his spiritual seed, the chief and head of which is Christ. (See the paraphrase and notes on *ver.* 16.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What egregious, and justly reproveable folly is it in those, that have once received the doctrine of justification alone by faith in Christ and his righteousness, to depart from it, and vainly imagine that they can be justified by their own works in obedience to any law whatsoever! and how inexcusably weak and self-contradictions is it for them to do this, after Christ has been evidently set forth before them, as crucified for the expiation of sin, and they have suffered reproaches and persecutions for their former profession of him! This is to begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh; to exclude themselves from the benefit of God's promises in the gospel; to render both Christ, and all their own sufferings for his sake, altogether useless to themselves; and to run directly counter to the plainest observation and experience, which cannot but assure us, that the vital power of religion, and God's attestations to it by his Spirit, do not attend the preaching of the law, but the gospel-doctrine of faith in Christ alone, for all acceptance with God to eternal life. This was the way in which Abraham was justified, according to the discoveries that were made of the promised seed in his days; and it is only by going into this way, that we can be his true children, to our spiritual and everlasting advantage: For the moral law pronounces a curse for every defect of obedience; and the scripture assures us, that we are all under sin, and that the only way in which we can be justified before God, is by faith in an atoning Saviour. Adored be the riches of divine grace, that Christ has redeemed them, that believe in him, from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them! Through him the blessing of Abraham, as to all external and saving benefits, (of which the Spirit, as given to them, is a sure pledge) comes upon them, though they are Gentiles, as effectually as if they had been native Jews; for the promise, which was made to Abraham and his seed, had a primary reference to Christ, and then to all his members, as one with him, and included in him. And how could the law, which was delivered at Mount Sinai by the ministration of angels, four hundred and thirty years after the promise was given, and confirmed by God himself to Abraham, so long before; how could this disannul that promise! It was so far from being inconsistent with the promise, that it was subservient to its grand design, while we consider it, as discovering and convincing of sin, and putting the awaken'd conscience upon flying to the only Saviour, who was typified by Moses, as sustaining the office of a Mediator between God and Israel, and while we consider it, as the means of training them up for a willing reception of Christ. But how valuable soever that dispensation was in its season, What cause have we to bless God for the clear revelation of his Messiah in the gospel, and for the more excellent and extensive blessings brought in by him! They are signified by baptism, which is come in the room\* of circumcision, as the initiating visible seal of the gospel-covenant to Gentiles as well as Jews: And if we have but an interest in Christ, through faith in him, whatever we were for nation, rank, or condition before, we are now, whether male or female, the children of God, one body in Christ, and in the best sense Abraham's seed, and heirs of all spiritual and heavenly blessings, according to the utmost meaning of the promise made to them.

## C H A P. IV.

The apostle proceeds to shew the folly of returning to legal observances for justification, from the rich advantages that the believing Jews were partakers of by the gospel-dispensation, which brought them out of the state of bondage under the law, to which they, like children under age, had been subject before, 1,—7. And from the exceeding happy change that was made upon the Gentile believers, by their conversion from idols to God, 8,—11. He thereupon reasons with them all against falling in with false teachers, from the great affection they had discovered towards himself and his ministry, and from the designing temper of those Judaizers that had crept in among them, 12,—18. He expresses his own tender and earnest concern for them, 19, 20.; and then, resuming his main argument, illustrates the difference between what is to be expected from the law, and from the gospel, in a figurative representation of the children of promise by Isaac, the son of Sarah, and of the children that were only after the flesh by Ishmael, the son of Hagar, 21,—31.

## TEXT.

NOW I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father:

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW to illustrate the vast preference of the gospel to the legal dispensation by a plain and familiar similitude, I say, that the heir of a good estate, during all the time of his non-age, stands in a manner on a level with a mere servant, as to subjection, and want of liberty for using and enjoying his inheritance, though he be, in right, the proprietor of the whole, he does not live like one entitled to all his riches.

2 But he is under the direction and discipline of masters, to educate him in such a way as may be most suitable to his present circumstances, and to the low conceptions of his young mind; and is under the allowance and government of guardians, or trustees, to order all things concerning him, and to manage his estate for him that he may be fitted to enter upon possession of it, and to receive it with advantage at such a term of life as had been beforehand settled by his father.

3 Even so, to apply this to the case of those of us that are *Jewish* believers, when under the Old Testament-dispensation, which may be called the infant-state of the church, with respect to spiritual light and liberty, privileges and enjoyments, we were like minors training up for a better state under the gospel; we were then dealt with more like servants than sons and heirs, as being under the servile and obscure discipline of the law, enslaved by its terrors, and tied down to its typical observances, which gave us only dawning hints of the

the spiritual and heavenly inheritance, that we were entitled to, by virtue of the promise made to *Abraham*, (*chap. iii. 18.*) and which observances, like the *A, B, C,* of children, may be styled the principles or rudiments of the world, because they consisted of resemblances taken from worldly things, and were suited to the instruction and government of children, that are most affected and influenced by sensible objects; and because they were so earthly in their own nature, that they could not of themselves carry any one's thoughts and hopes, views and relish, beyond the blessings of this world, to those of heaven and glory.

4 But, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law.

4 But when the full time was come, which God the Father, who gave us our inheritance, had fore-appointed in his eternal decrees, and fore-told and marked out in ancient prophecies; and which, by reason of the general and great degeneracy on one hand, and expectations on the other amongst the *Jews*, was high time for a reformation, and for introducing a more illustrious state of light, liberty, and joy to the children of God, that they might live and appear like those that stand in so near and dear a relation to him; he then, in the riches of his infinite wisdom, love and grace, sent his own eternally pre-existent Son, in a way of special operation and manifestation, into our world, that he, by wonderful dispensation, might be conceived, and born of a virgin, (*Matth. i. 18,—23.*) and so might be emphatically and peculiarly the *seed of the woman*, miraculously made of her substance, without the concurrence of any man, according to the first promise of him, (*Gen. iii. 15.*); and that having voluntarily assumed human nature into personal union with himself, he, who was both God and man, might, by a judicial constitution be placed as a subject both under the precept and the curse of the law, which we were bound to have obeyed, but had transgressed, and thereby incurred its penalty.

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

5 The great design of whose incarnation, and being thus brought under the law, was, that he might be fitted for, and go through a complete course of obedience and sufferings unto death, in answer to all its demands and at that dear expence might redeem his people that were under the law, and under its curse, (*chap. iii. 10, 13.*) to the end that those of us, who believe in him, might be no longer under its condemning sentence, nor under its rigorous administration, but might be made partakers of all the privileges of the gospel-state, that pertain to the adoption of children, even of such as are arrived at mature age. (See the note on *chap. iii. 21.*)



6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

6 And because God has so far dignified you, my Christian brethren, whether ye be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as to make you his adult sons by a free act of gracious adoption; and to entitle you to, and give you possession of, such high and glorious privileges; therefore, as a token and proof of it, he has sent forth the Holy Spirit from heaven, who is the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and is communicated by special dispensation, through the exalted Head and Redeemer, to dwell in your souls with a richer abundance of gifts and graces than were vouchsafed under the *Mosaic* oecconomy to form you into the temper of the children of God, and bear witness with your spirits that ye are so, (*Rom. viii. 15, 16.*) and to give you a humble liberty and boldness in your dealings with God, whereby ye are taught and enabled to claim and call upon him, and to be ingenuously affected toward him with desire, faith, and love, with becoming reverence and filial obedience, with complacential delight and joy, and with holy confidence in his care and kindness, and zeal for his honour and glory, as your heavenly Father; which, to comprehend both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, I chuse to express in the *Hebrew* language, by the word *Abba*, and by another word in the *Greek*, which answers to it, as it signifies *Father* (*πατήρ*.)

7 Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

7 Whosoever therefore you be, that believes in Christ, you are no longer to be accounted and treated as a servant, kept at a distance, and subjected to a severe discipline, as the children of God in their minority were under the law; but you are to be looked upon and dealt with, as a son of ripe age; and if you are a son, then are you an heir; yea, if a son under the liberty of the gospel, then an heir in possession of a great part of your inheritance, as an earnest of your enjoying the whole in all its grandeur and delights, when you arrive at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, (*Eph. iv. 13.*); an heir, I say, of no less an inheritance, than of the all sufficient God himself for your portion, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in his right, and on his account, and together with him, who is his eternal Son and heir of all things, (*Heb. i. 2.*) Surely then none of you can have any good reason to return back to the law, and lay the grounds of your acceptance with God in your obedience to it.

\* Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which

8 But, (*αλλὰ*) as to those of you that are *Gentile* believers, it is most of all absurd and unaccountably foolish in you to entertain a thought of any thing like

which by nature  
are no gods.

it: To convince you of this, and impress you with a deep sense of it, let me remind you, that in the days of your unregeneracy, and all along in your state of heathenism, ye were utter strangers to the knowledge of the only true God, and to all promises of his favour and love, and all discoveries of the way wherein ye might be discharged from the guilt of your sins, and find acceptance with him to eternal life; and being then ignorant of him, ye paid religious service to idols of your own invention, whether stocks or stones, or the sun, moon, and stars, or some famous heroes or benefactors, or other imaginary deities\*, none of which had any proper divinity in them; and therefore, whatsoever the pretence might be, no religious homage ought to have been offered to any of them, as not being partakers of the nature and perfections of the true God, who only is to be worshipped and adored. (*Matth. iv. 10.*)

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again into the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

9 But now, since ye have been brought by the light and power of the gospel, to the knowledge of the only true God; or rather have, in his infinite condescension and grace, been taken notice of, and particularly regarded by him, who has found you out, and brought you to the knowledge of himself through Jesus Christ, and owned you for *his*; and now, after ye, or at least some of you, as I trust, have been approved, and freely accepted of him in the Beloved: What an insatiation and piece of ingratitude is it in any of you, to turn aside again from the light and grace of the gospel, and from all its holy and delightful liberty, to a bondage, which ye were never under before, and consists in being subject to the dark hints and severe injunctions of the *Mosaic* law, which are so weak as to be utterly insufficient to make peace with God, or purge the conscience from guilt, or to secure from his wrath, and obtain acceptance with him; and are so poor and *beggarly*, as to be in themselves altogether incapable of enriching the soul with spiritual knowledge, grace and peace, or any solid comfort and satisfaction relating to its best and eternal interests? and they are indeed now so impoverished, since their

typical

#### N O T E.

\* Here is a manifest confutation of the popish distinction between *Dulia* and *Latria*, as if the former were a lower kind of worship, which may be given to saints and angels, and the latter only were to be appropriated to God: For the apostle in condemning what these *Galatians* did, when they were idolatrous heathens, says, (*idolatrias*) Ye

gave *Dulia* to them, which by nature are no Gods; assigning that as the reason why such religious homage ought not to have been paid to them. And this reason holds equally strong, not only against all religious adoration of saints and angels, but even of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, unless he were *by nature* God.

typical meaning has been fulfilled in Christ, that there is nothing in them. How surprising and inexcusable then is it, that even some of *you* who could have no antecedent attachment to the law, as the *Jews* had, should desire to go backwards, and put yourselves again under a yoke or servitude, instead of that, though of another sort, which ye formerly were enslaved by, and are now happily delivered from\*?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

10 That ye have strong propensions to blend the *Mosaic* law with the gospel as if ye could not otherwise be justified before God, is too apparent from your being, as I perceive, zealous for observing (like the carnal *Jews* that lay a great stress upon these things) their sabbaths and new-moons, (see the note on *Col. ii. 16.*) as well as their first and seventh months; and their solemn festivals, such as the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles; and their seventh year of release, and fiftieth year of jubilee, as tho' the whole law were still as much in force as ever.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

11 When I think of these sad defections, I cannot but be tenderly concerned for you, and terribly afraid, lest all the pains I have taken with you, by faithfully and laboriously talking in private, and preaching in public, should eventually prove ineffectual, and to no manner of good purpose, as to many of you †; and so all my hopes of you should be disappointed, and ye should fall into perdition.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as ye are; ye have not injured me at all.

12 Let me then, my beloved brethren, earnestly intreat you, by all the endearments of one that heartily wishes your happiness, to entertain the same sentiments, as to the important article of justification, with myself, who once was as zealous of the law as any of you can be, tho', through the grace given to me, I now count all

#### N O T E S.

\* Their turning again to weak and beggarly elements, and desiring again to be in bondage, cannot be understood as if they had been used to those elements and that bondage before; because, as appears from the foregoing verse, they had been converted, not from *Jewish* proselytism, but from *idolatrous* heathenism, and so never had been under the *Mosaic* law before; and therefore it seems necessary to understand the apostle to mean that, as they had been under heathen bondage, and enslaved by the principles and practices of so mean and wretched a religion, from which they were now delivered, it was very strange that they should desire to be circumcised, and thereby obliged to observe the whole law of *Moses* for justification, and so come again into bondage, which, though it was of a different nature from what they were under before; yet was really a state of bond-

dage, directly contrary to the light and liberty of the gospel into which they had been brought.

† If the *Galatians* had not laid a stress upon their legal observances, as necessary to justification, I can hardly think that the apostle would have expressed his fears so strongly as he does here, lest all his labour with them should prove to be in vain; and that he would have carried the matter so far, as to tell them roundly, that on this account Christ would be of no effect to them, (*chap. v. 5.*) For, though they might have been in a gross mistake, as to the obligation of observing the *Mosaic* law, yet it would not surely have been a fundamental error, inconsistent with salvation, unless they depended upon it, as necessary to their acceptance with God. (see the note on *chap. v. 6.*)

all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, &c. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) and I beg of you to be the same in affection to me as I am to you; for I am so much one with you, as to be willing to condescend to, and bear with you in the use of Jewish rites, while they are left as matters of indifference, and even to use them myself, on special occasions, (see the notes on Acts xvi. 3. and xviii. 18. and xxi. 14, —26.) as far as may be consistent with the truth and liberty of the gospel, and conducive to the welfare of your souls †; and my heart is with you, as much as yours can be with me: Ye may therefore be sure that I have no ill-will to you, in what I have been saying; nor indeed have I had any occasion for it hitherto, since I never yet received any ill-treatment from you: And I love you so well, that, if the attempts of false teachers to supplant me, (ver. 17.) have ever carried you into any design of personal disrespect or injury to me, I can easily overlook it, so far as it only relates to myself.

13 Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

13 As to my affection toward you, ye well know, and cannot but remember, that when I first came among you, such was my solicitous concern and earnest desire for your salvation, that I laboured abundantly in explaining, proving, and recommending the gospel of Christ to you, under great difficulties and sufferings in the flesh, to the impairing of my bodily strength; under injurious defamations and reproaches; and under considerable disadvantages from the despicable appearance of my person, and the ungraceful manner of my delivery. (2 Cor. x. 10. and xi. 6. and xii. 7.) \*

14 And my temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

14 And as to your affection to me, ye were then so wonderfully taken with my ministry, that (ὡς ἰσχυρότατον) ye did not slight it, or set me at nought, much less did ye reject the doctrine I preached, or (ὡς ἀγγέλου) disdain me, like one that deserved to be spit upon with contempt and indignation, as some others have done, on account of the infirmities and humbling trials that I was exercised with in the body: But ye, nevertheless, entertained

#### N O T E S.

† As the apostle's chief desire was to bring them over to what he knew to be the truth of the gospel, (ver. 19.) so he elsewhere tells us, that, as far as lawfully might be, he was made all things to all men, that he might save some, and that he pleas'd all men in all things, not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved (1 Cor. ix. 22. and x. 33.) And therefore, thoughts of this kind are taken into the paraphrase, together with an agreement in affection.

\* Some or other, and especially the last of these trials, as the apostle calls them in the next verse, seem to be meant by the infirmity or weakness (ἀσθενία) of his flesh. But as the Galatians well knew what he referred to, there was no occasion for him to particularize them: And this, as Mr Locke observes, is an instance of the unavoidable obscurity of some passages in epistolary writings without any fault of the author. But we should remember, that this is such an obscurity as relates to things of little importance to us.

entertained and embraced my message, and me for its sake, with as much readiness and pleasure, as a messenger of God and ambassador of Christ, as if I had been one of the holy angels, whom God had dispatched immediately from heaven to deliver it to you; yea, as if I had been even the Messiah himself, whom God has anointed to be the only Saviour.

15 Where is then the blindness you speak of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

15 What then is now become of all those high expressions of ardent wishes for my prosperity in the work of the Lord, which at that time ye heaped upon me, and of all the happiness which ye then so solemnly, and with such zeal, and appearances of sincerity, professed to have and hope for, by means of my ministering the gospel to you? Is all this forgot and lost, and like to come to nothing, though ye then talked so much about it? for I myself, having been an eye-witness of it, must testify concerning you, that, as far as I could judge by words and actions, such was the fervor of your love and joy, that had it been a possible thing, and could it have been of any advantage to me, ye would have undergone all the severity and inconvenience of even plucking your own eyes out of your heads, to put them into mine.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

16 How then comes it to pass, that ye should now grow so cool to me, who am still the same to you; and that ye should be so ready to give up those very doctrines which ye then so much admired and were affected with; and should now think of forsaking me and them, and of adhering to judaizing teachers and their pernicious errors? What is it that could induce you to take such an unhappy and surprizing turn? Is it because I have been plain and faithful in maintaining the truth and importance of the pure doctrine of the gospel, and in warning you of the dangerous consequence of mixing the works of the law with faith in Christ for justification? Must I be counted your enemy for this? why, this was the most kind and friendly thing I could do for you; as such I designed it, and ye ought to have received it: But if any of you think otherwise, and are prejudiced against me for it, the greater is your guilt, and the more are ye to be pitied.

17 They zealously affect you, but not well: yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them.

17 As to those *false teachers*, that would pervert you, and prejudice your minds against me, they profess to have an extraordinary affection and zealous concern for you; but it is not with an upright design for your spiritual advantage, nor do they act honourably (*εὐδοκῶς*) in their attempts upon you; nay, they principally aim at alienating your hearts from me, and my apostolic

apostolic doctrine and authority, that they may engross you to themselves, and bring you into a blind and tame submission to their own usurped dominion over your faith; they would shut out all your regards to me and my office, that the whole tide of your esteem, honour, and applause, may run toward them.

17 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

18 But it is (καλόν) a very beautiful, laudable, and excellent temper, much to be desired, that your zeal be always carried out uniformly to the person \* or thing, that is really worthy of it; and that it be so, not merely during my presence with you, to win you over to a good opinion of myself, whom ye then took to be a good man; and of the gospel, which, as ye then thought, is certainly the best news that ever was brought to sinners of our world: This would be a plain evidence that your impressions were well-grounded on judgment, and fixed in your hearts; whereas your unsteady temper and conduct have a quite contrary aspect.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.

19 My dear, tho' weak children in the faith, whom I hoped I had instrumentally begotten to Christ through the gospel, (1 Cor. iv. 15.) I seek not yours, but you; and does not value what ye think of me, if ye be but brought home to Christ, that he may have the glory of saving you; and therefore, like a woman in the painful hour of child-birth, I have now again as strong throws and agonies of spirit, and as pressing a solicitude for your recovery as ever I formerly had for your conversion from idolatry to the Christian religion; and I cannot but go on in the vehemence of my concern to use all possible means with you, till I may have the pleasure of finding, that the pure doctrine of justification by Christ alone thro' faith in him, is really formed and fixed in your minds and hearts, so as to influence you, like a vital principle, in all your dealings with God for eternal life; and that all the beauties of his holy image are impressed upon you.

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, as I stand in doubt of you.

20 So great is my desire after you, that, were it in my power, I could heartily wish myself to be at this very time in your company to talk freely with you, that I might confirm the truth, answer objections, silence cavils, and satisfy doubts and scruples by word of mouth, which cannot be done so well by a letter; and might vary my discourse with you, in a way of encouragement or rebuke, as occasions require. And O how would it rejoice my very soul to find room for speaking with

N O T E.

\* In a good thing (in καλόν) may likewise be rendered in a good man, by which the apostle is supposed in his modest way, to mean

himself: but as he all along speaks of his doctrine, as well as of his person, it seems best to include both.

with a softer tone of voice, and with greater encouragement to you, than your present threatening circumstances seem to admit of! for to tell you the truth, by what I have learnt of late concerning your principles and behaviour, I am much in doubt, whether the work of grace has ever been effectually wrought in some of your hearts; and whether many of you may not at length, contrary to my former hopes, prove to be utter apostates.—But, to return to my main argument,

18 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

21 I would seriously ask those of you, that are inclined to be under the law for justification, by your own obedience to it; and I beg that your own consciences would answer me, as in the fear and presence of God, and as though ye were now actually standing before his awful bar in judgment; When that law is read in your religious assemblies, or elsewhere, do ye not hear and attend to, or do ye not understand and consider, what dreadful things it denounces against all that are under it to be dealt with according to it? (*chap. iii. 10.*) And do ye never reflect in particular, how the writings of *Moses*, whom ye seem to be so fond of, has figured out the wide difference there is between those that seek justification by the works of the law, and those that seek it alone by faith in Christ?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

22 For there it is recorded, (*Gen. xvi. 15. and xxi. 2, 3.*) of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, with whom God made his covenant and with his seed, that he had two sons which were types of different sorts of dispensations, and of different sorts of that patriarch's seed: One was *Ishmael* by *Hagar*, a young woman, who was no better than an *Egyptian*, and a slave under bonds of servitude to her mistress, (*Gen. xvi. 1, 2.*) and the other was *Isaac* by *Sarah*, his proper wife, who, as such, was a free-woman entitled to the privileges of her relation to such a husband \*.

23 But he who was of the bond-woman was born after the flesh: but he of the free-woman was by promise.

23 But there was likewise this further difference between them, *Ishmael*, the son whom he had by *Hagar* the bond-slave, was born only according to the common law of natural generation, while both the parents were young enough to have children in the ordinary course of things; whereas *Isaac*, who was *Abraham's* son by *Sarah* his lawful wife, was given him in an extraordinary, and even miraculous manner, by virtue of a free and gracious promise, at an unexpected time of life, when both father and mother were past age, and naturally

#### N O T E.

\* As *Abraham* had more sons by *Keturah*, (*Gen. xxvi. 1, 2.*) which the apostle takes no notice of, it seems that there was some-

thing peculiarly prefigurative in *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, rather than in them.

23 Which things are an allegory : for these are the two covenants ; the one from the mount Sinai , which gendereth to bondage, which is *Agr*.

turally incapable of having any issue. (*Gen. xviii. 10, 11.*)

24 These things, though really facts that are related only in an historical manner, were intended of God to be, and accordingly are, allegorized in scripture for spiritual purposes †, as figurative representations of the miserable condition of those, on one hand, that are under the *Sinai*-covenant, and, like the *Jewish* zealots of this day, use it merely as a covenant of works ; and of the happiness of those, on the other, who, as true believers in Christ, depend entirely on the free promises of the covenant of grace for all acceptance with God through him : For in this symbolical history, these two women and their respective sons signify those two covenants, the first of them represented by *Hagar*, is that which was made between God and *Israel* at mount *Sinai*, (see the note on *Heb. viii. 6.*) and which by the terrible manner of its delivery, the strictness of its precepts, and the severity of its curse, tends to the begetting of a servile and enslaved temper of spirit, and would certainly subject them that are under it to the worst of all captivity and everlasting destruction, were they left to its terms without any further relief, which was provided for in the promise to *Abraham*, and is actually brought in by the gospel.

25 For this *Agr* is mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, and answereth to *Jerusalem* which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

25 For this *Hagar* and her son, which were not to inherit the blessing promised to *Abraham* and his seed, but were cast out of his family and covenant, (*ver. 30.*) are a lively and affecting representation of the rejected state of those that are under the law, which was delivered at mount *Sinai* in the desert of *Arabia* †, and by the tenor of which they were to fall under a curse, in-

stead

#### N O T E S.

† Mr *Peirce* accurately renders these words (*αἵτις εἰς ἀλλήγορίαν*) which things are allegorized ; and has taken a great deal of critical pains to shew, that the apostle here refers to *Isaiah's* allegorizing this history, chap. liv. 1. which he indeed thinks was not originally designed to represent the state of things to which the prophet and the apostle apply them. But as that learned author himself afterwards observes, that *Sarah's* being spoken of as the mother of the believing *Gentiles*, is very agreeable to other places of scripture, such as *John viii. 39, 41.* *Rom. ix. 7, —9.* and *1 Pet. iii. 6.* which represent all the children of God as the children of *Abraham*, and particularly as *Abraham's* children by *Sarah* ; I do not see why it may not be allowed that *Sarah* and *Hagar* were originally design'd of God, though, perhaps, not then understood by *Abraham*, as figurative representations of the difference that should be

made between the carnal and the spiritual seed of *Abraham*. (See *Pierce's* 1st dissertation at the end of his paraphrase on the *Philippians*.)

\* Here, and in the foregoing verse, we have a plain instance of the verb *εἶναι*, as used for *signifies* or *represents*, and that with respect to the covenants or testaments, (*1 Cor. xxi. 14.* *ver. 24.*) No wonder therefore that it should be taken in this sense, when in the institution of the Lord's supper, Christ says of the bread, *This is my body* ; and speaking of the wine says, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood.* (*1 Cor. xxi. 25, 26.*)

† *Sinai* and *Horeb* were probably two tops of the same mountain in *Arabia Petrea* ; or rather *Horeb* was a common name of the whole ridge of mountains on which *Sinai* was situated, and was called *Horeb* from the excessive dryness of it. See *Univers. Hist. vol. I. p. 481.*



stead of inheriting a blessing, who did not in all things conform to it, (*chap. iii. 10.*); and this answers to the present state of the earthly *Jerusalem*, which is no longer the seat of the divine presence, but is abandoned of God for the infidelity of its inhabitants, who are in the most dreadful bondage to sin and Satan, as *Hagar* and her son *Ismael*, and their descendants were, upon their exclusion from the family of *Abraham*, and from all the blessings of his covenant.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

26 But the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the church of the living God, which consists of true believers in Christ, that seek to be justified through faith in him alone, is delivered from the curse of the law, and made partaker of all the blessings of the gospel which were promised to *Abraham* and his seed, (*chap. iii. 13, 14.*); this gospel-church, which is of a heavenly nature, and has its original from heaven, tends toward it, and shall be admitted into it, was typified by *Sarah* the free-woman, and by *Isaac* the son of the promise, and may be styled the parent of all of us who believe, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as we were begotten to the faith of Christ by means of the word and ordinances dispensed therein; even as *Sarah* was the mother of *Isaac*, and he was a figure of all the true seed of the covenant made with *Abraham*. And this may be still further confirmed, particularly with respect to believing *Gentiles*, under the gospel-state, by a testimony of scripture, which speaks of this very thing also in the allegorical way.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

27 For it is written in a prophecy of the New Testament-times, and with a reference to *Sarah* and *Hagar*, (*Isa. liv. 1.* See the note on *ver. 24.*) Rejoice and be exceeding glad, ye *Gentile* nations, who, like a woman that has no child, were for many ages destitute of a seed to serve the Lord, that should be accounted to him for a generation, as *Sarah* was, till she came to be ninety years old, when by the ordinary course of nature there could be no hope of her bearing a son, (*Gen. xvii. 17.*); Break forth into strong and vehement acclamations of joy; and shout aloud in your praises, O ye who have never hitherto bred and brought forth any children for God, to bear his holy image, and to glorify and enjoy him: For such is his amazing love and compassion to you, whom he has seemed so long to neglect, that as the descendants of *Sarah*, who was desolate and past hope of child-bearing, are more numerous than those of *Hagar*, whom *Abraham* also took to wife, and who had a son by him while she was in her seeming age; so under the gospel-dispensation much greater numbers of children

children shall be born to God, and adopted into his family from among you, who till then were out of the pale of his covenant, and had no expectation of his espousing you to himself, than ever were found among the natural seed of *Abraham*, who, for a great series of time before, were married under the Mount-Sinai dispensation in a visible covenant to him as their husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as *Isaac* was, are the children of promise,

28 Now, to apply this important allegory, we, my brethren in the faith of Christ, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are by special grace the true children of the promise made to *Abraham* and his seed, in distinction from those that seek to be justified by the works of the law, even as *Isaac*, the son of *Sarah* the free-woman, was born by virtue of the promise, and was the heir of its blessings, in distinction from *Ishmael*, the son of *Hagar* the bond-woman.

29 But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

29 But as in that age, *Ishmael*, who was born according to the usual course of nature, and had no advantages but what pertained to the flesh, mocked and derided, (*Gen. xxi. 9.*) and so with his malignant tongue, at least, persecuted *Isaac*, who was born by an extraordinary operation of the Spirit according to the promise given to *Abraham*, that he should have a son by his wife *Sarah*; and who was indeed the inheritor of all the covenant-promises made to him and his seed, (*Gen. xvii. 19.*) notwithstanding *Ishmael's* insulting him for his pretensions of this kind \*, even so it is at this day, with respect to us who adhere to the pure gospel of Christ, and are born of God and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and whom *Jewish* zealots and self-justificaries are exceeding violent, and highly enraged against, for maintaining, that they only, *which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.* (*Chap. iii. 9.*)

30 Nevertheless, what faith the scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.

30 Nevertheless, the consequences of these things will be very terrible to them, and happy to us, as they are exemplified in the case of those two sons of *Abraham*: For what doth the scripture tell us with regard hereunto? it introduces *Sarah* as saying to her husband, and God as approving and confirming it, (*Gen. xxi. 10, 12.*) Expel the bond-woman and her insolent son out of your house and favour; for I cannot bear, that the son of your bond-slave should inherit covenant-blessings with my son *Isaac*, whom I, your lawful wife, have borne

#### N O T E.

\* It was immediately upon *Ishmael's* mocking *Isaac*, that *Sarah* spake to *Abraham* to cast out the bond-woman and her son, assigning this reason for it, that the son of the bond-woman should not be heir with her son, (*Gen. xxi.*

*9, 10.*) It therefore seems that what *Ishmael* had mocked *Isaac* for, was his claiming to be their father's sole heir; and that this awakened *Sarah's* warm resentment against the bond-woman and her son.

bore to you. In like manner, God will exclude from his church and covenant all those that seek to be justified by the law; and will not suffer them to inherit his kingdom of grace and glory together with those that are his children through faith in Christ. (*Chap. iii. 26.*)

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

31 So then, my Christian brethren, to sum up all that I have been saying on this point, we, who believe on the Lord Jesus alone for justification to eternal life, are not of those, that, seeking it by the law, were prefigured by *Ishmael* the son of *Hagar*, and shall be shut out from the blessings of the gospel-state here, and from the heavenly inheritance hereafter; but we are the children of the promise, signified by *Isaac*, the son of *Sarah*, that are entitled to all the blessings of grace and glory: and therefore we have nothing to do with the *Mosaic* servile dispensation; much less are we to imagine that any of its ceremonial rites are necessary to our acceptance with God.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What darkness and bondage of spirit are God's own children subject to, when like those under the legal dispensation, they have but low views of the light and liberty of the gospel! They live more like servants than sons and heirs. But how great and glorious are the advantages of the New Testament-state, that are brought in by the Son of God! His Father sent him at the appointed and fittest time to assume human nature into personal union with himself, and he, being the promised seed of the woman, became subject to the law in his peoples stead, that he might redeem them from its curse, and from the servile temper which the Sinai-covenant produced in them while they were under it; and that they might be admitted to all the privileges of the children of God, as arrived at mature age: and what a sure and delightful evidence have we, that this is our happy case, when God gives us the Spirit of his Son, to embolden our humble claims of him as our Father, and to witness with our spirits, that we are his sons and heirs through Jesus Christ! If we have any experience of this, it is because God took a gracious notice of us before we knew him, or turned from all our idols to him, who is by nature God, and the only object of religious worship. But how surprising is their ingratitude and folly, who, after all professions of this kind, depart from the gospel-doctrine of justification through faith in Christ to the works of the law! A defection in this great point gives reason to fear, lest all the pains that have been bestowed on such, with hopeful appearances of success, should prove to be in vain, and they should turn utter apostates! O how tenderly concerned are faithful ministers for persons in this threatening situation, whom they formerly hoped they had been instruments of begetting to Christ! They travail as it were in birth again, that his true doctrine and holy image may be formed in them; they study to accommodate their discourses to their circumstances, and would be glad to speak comfortable things to them; they are grieved at the unsteadiness of their zeal, which ought to be always carried out to only good men and good things; and they cannot but solemnly warn them of their danger, and of the artful methods of those that lye in wait to deceive them, under feigned pretences of great affection to them, while they only mean to profelyte them to themselves, and alienate their hearts from those whom they justly esteemed before. What can be a more likely means, by the blessing of God, to reclaim such revolvers, than to remind them of the terrible things that the law lays to such as under it? This may be learned from the instances of *Hagar* the bond-

bond-woman, in opposition to Sarah the free-woman, and their respective sons; the figurative meaning of which is, that they who rely on their own performances of any kind, according to the covenant of works, will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven; but they who adhere by faith to the free promise through Jesus Christ, according to the gospel, will inherit eternal life. These are blessed indeed; and how much soever they may be derided and persecuted for their profession of this important doctrine, they may rejoice in hope that the issue of all will make them rich amends for ever.

## C H A P. V.

*The apostle applies the foregoing discourse in an earnest exhortation, enforced by various arguments, to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel, 1, —12. To take heed of abusing that liberty by indulging a sinful temper, contrary to the great law of love, 13,—15. And to walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, which are opposite to each other, and the works of which respectively are described at large, 16,—26.*

### TEXT.

STand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

### PARAPHRASE.

SINCE, as has been observed, there is so much danger in the scheme of those false teachers, that would carry you off from the gospel to the law of *Moses* for justification; and since true believers are the children of God, represented by *Isaac*, the son of the free-woman, I earnestly beseech and exhort you, my brethren, to maintain your ground, like soldiers that stand firm in rank and file; and to abide stedfastly in the belief, possession, and practice of that happy, holy, and delightful freedom from the law, as a covenant of works, and from its curse, as also from all obligations of obedience to its ceremonial precepts; which noble freedom is brought in by the satisfaction that Christ has made as a priest, in fulfilling both the ceremonial and moral law: and by his settlement in the gospel, and enlightening our minds and impressing our hearts according to it, as a prophet and king: And let love, gratitude, and obedience to him, as well as a concern for the safety and comfort of your own souls, engage you to take the utmost care that ye be not incumbered and oppressed again, (see the note on *chap. iv. 9.*) with a servile yoke, which circumcision would lay upon you to comply with the whole of the *Mosaic* law, as if that were necessary to salvation, (*ver. 3.* and *Acts xv. 1.*)

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

2 Observe the terrible consequence, I *Paul*, the inspired apostle, (*chap. i. 1.*) who am unjustly defamed, as though I preached up circumcision among some people to serve a turn, (see the note on *ver. 11.*); even I do solemnly declare, and leave it as a standing record, that if ye be circumcised under an apprehension of its being

being necessary to your acceptance with God, nothing that Christ has done and suffered, or that his gospel reveals, will be of any saving advantage to you.

2 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law.

3 For as I have always maintained in my ministrations every where; so I now repeat it with great earnestness, as a most concerning truth, to every man, be he Jew or Gentile, who is circumcised with this view; that he is thereby obliged, under pain of condemnation, to keep the whole *Mosaic* law, which is such a strict condition of life, as none in his present fallen state ever can fulfil; and yet for the least failure therein he remains under the curse, (*chap. iii. 10.*) and so can never obtain his end.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

4 The blood and righteousness, gospel and Spirit of the anointed Saviour will be of no avail to any of you: But ye are, as it were discharged from Christ, (*καταργησιντες αφο του χριστου*) that seek pardon and acceptance by the works of the law, and so set up a righteousness of your own, instead of, or together with his for that purpose; ye hereby practically renounce, and fall away \* from the doctrine of justification freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which ye once made a profession of, and by which alone any of you can be saved.

5 For we thro' the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

5 For, through the light and influence of the Holy Spirit according to the gospel, we Jews as well as Gentiles, that believe to the saving of our souls, look and wait with earnest desire, expectation and patience for eternal life, which is the great object of our hope, (*Col. i. 5. and Tit. ii. 13.*) not on account of any righteousness of our own, but merely on the foot of the righteousness of Christ, as our only title to it through faith in him, which faith his Spirit likewise works in us.

6 For, in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.

6 For with respect to interest in Christ, and justification by virtue of our federal and vital union with him, a being merely circumcised, or not circumcised, under the New Testament-dispensation, signifies nothing at all †; our state in Christ is no way affected by either of them, while circumcision is not considered as a recommendation, nor the want of it has a hindrance to our acceptance with God: But the only thing, which, according to gospel-constitution avails to this purpose,

is

## N O T E S.

\* Grace here plainly signifies, as it doth in *Tit. ii. 10, 11.* and other places, the doctrine of grace. For that is what the apostle has all along been speaking of, in opposition to the law and its works.

† The indifference with which the apostle here speaks of circumcision, makes it appar-

ent, that his argument, all along against it, is not to be understood, merely of the thing itself, but of the stress that was laid upon it, as necessary to salvation, and as binding to an observation of the whole law, under the notion of a condition of life. (See the note on *chap. iv. 11.*)

is such an effectual faith, as rests upon Christ alone for salvation, and is proved to be sincere by its powerful influence on the heart to render him precious to us, and engage our affectionate love to and delight in him, and in his members, word, and ways for his sake, together with a universal benevolence to all men, according to the native disposition of a *new creature*, (*chap. vi. 15.*)

7 Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that you should not obey the truth?

7 Ye, my brethren, did set out, to all appearance, exceeding well, and for some time proceeded and press'd forward with a promising zeal in your profession of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, like persons that ran in earnest for the great prize of salvation alone through him. Who then is it, (pray consider this matter seriously with the reasons of it) that has stopped you in your way, or driven you back from it, that ye should not persist in a persuasion of, and yield yourselves up by an obediential faith to, the authority of Christ, according to the truth of the gospel, with respect to this main point, which enters so deeply into your dealings with God for eternal life?

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

8 Whosoever he be that has given this pernicious turn to your notions and practice, I am very sure that your present judaizing sentiments, so directly contrary to the whole design of Christianity, about the grounds of acceptance with God, is not owing to any thing ever said by me, who ministred the gospel to you in a quite contrary strain, and was instrumental in bringing you over to the Christian faith, (see the note on *chap. i. 6.*); nor is it derived from that God who spoke and worked by me in calling you to the knowledge of Christ, and of the way of salvation alone thro' him, and that, as I hoped, in an effectual manner.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

9 Some corrupt influence must have insinuated itself among you from *Satan* and his instruments, tho' perhaps, at first but in one particular point, and by the management of but one or two persons, and may hitherto have perverted only a few of you; yet remember it will operate with malignant and spreading efficacy, unless timely prevented, to the infecting of your whole scheme of evangelical principles, and one way or other of the whole church; even as a little leaven diffuses itself by an insensible, but powerful fermentation, till it sours the whole mass of dough into which it is cast.

10 I have confidence in you thro' the Lord, that you will be none other-wise minded.

10 I have indeed mentioned my great fear about you, (*chap. iv. 11, 20.*) and yet, after all, I cannot but have a prevailing charitable hope, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, concerning many of you, at least, that when

minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, who-  
soever he be.

when ye come to reflect on my fears and solemn warn-  
ings, with the reasons of them, ye will think no other-  
wise than I myself do, about the danger of this infec-  
tion, and the necessity of making a full and speedy stand  
against it\*; and will pass a church-censure upon him,  
be he ever so great or famous, (*ὉΥΤΑΡΑΧΤΕΥ*) who is the  
principle instrument of throwing such confusion among  
you, of perplexing your minds, and even terrifying you  
into his destructive errors: But, whether ye do your  
duty herein or not, he, who has a great deal to answer  
for, will sooner or later fall under the righteous judg-  
ment of God, to be punished, in this world, or the  
next, unless he give him repentance to the acknowledge-  
ment of the truth. (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.)

11 And I, bre-  
thren, if I yet  
preach circumci-  
sion, why do I yet  
suffer persecution?  
then is the offence  
of the cross ceas-  
ed.

11 But (*ἵνα*) as to myself, brethren, if, as some have  
invidiously reported †, I after all preach up circumci-  
sion as necessary to salvation, or plead for the believing  
*Gentiles* being circumcised in order thereunto, how  
comes it to pass that I still undergo, and cheerfully sub-  
mit to the severest persecutions from the bigotted *Jews*,  
as it is notorious I do wherever I come? Were I once  
to comply with their corrupt notions about superadding  
the works of the law to the merits of Christ, the chief  
ground of their being offended at the doctrine of sal-  
vation by a crucified Saviour would immediately cease,  
and I should be no longer exposed to their furious out-  
rage for preaching it. My great and continual suffer-  
ings therefore on this account are a standing confutation  
of all suggestions of this nature to defame me.

12 I would they  
were even cut off  
which trouble  
you.

12 I heartily wish that they who have so grievously  
perplexed and disturbed you, and subverted the faith of  
some among you, were cast out of the church by a so-  
lemn sentence of excommunication in the name of the  
Lord Jesus; and so turned over to him for the vindica-  
tion of his own cause, and bringing them to repentance;

OR

## N O T E S

\* 'Tis not improbably thought that judg-  
ment may have a reference to the censure of  
the church, which the apostle wishes might  
be inflicted on this person and his associates,  
ver. 12, whom he had likened to a little leaven  
that leavens the whole lump, ver. 9. just as he  
did the incessant person when he wrote to  
the *Corinthians* to cast him out of the church,  
1 Cor. v. 5, 6. And yet it is proper to take  
in a consideration of the judgment of God;  
because this confirms, and gives the most  
awful sanction to a church-censure duly pro-  
nounced; and God will deal with the man  
that deserves it, whether the church doth its  
duty towards him or not.

† The apostle here plainly intimates, that  
some, to lessen and expose his character, had  
suggested as if he were an unstable man,  
preaching up circumcision in some places,  
tho' in others he preached it down. They  
might probably take occasion for this from  
his circumcising *Timothy*, to prevent offence  
to the *Jews*, and remove that obstruction to  
the usefulness of his ministry among them,  
(see the note on *Acts* xvi. 3.) and from his  
speaking for a charitable forbearance, as he  
often did, with regard to circumcision, when  
no stress was laid upon it, and yet Jewish pre-  
judices remained in its favour.

or that in God's own way they may be hindered from bringing any further mischief and dishonour upon his name, church, and gospel.

12 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

13 For ye, my brethren, have been called by the gospel to a noble liberty of spirit in dealing with God as your Father, and in your deliverance from ceremonial observances, and from the curse of the law; a liberty which ought not to be broke in upon by any one whatsoever, and which ye ought to abide by as more valuable than your lives: only remember, that it is not a liberty which discharges you from obligations to keep the moral law as the law of your creation, and the indispensable and unchangeable rule of righteousness, and therefore it is not to be abused unto licentiousness, and taking occasion to gratify your pride, passion, and sensuality, or any other corruption of human nature; nor is it to be managed in such a manner, as to lead others into sin, but it is to be improved unto all kind and brotherly affection and friendly offices in serving one another, by all proper means, as those that are bound to seek each other's edification and advantage.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

14 For all the precepts of the second table of the moral law are summ'd up by our Lord himself, (*Mat. xxii. 39, 40.*) in *one* so very comprehensive, that a due regard to it, from a principle of love to God, would readily lead you to a compliance with all the rest; and that is this, Your benevolent temper and beneficent behaviour toward your fellow creatures, and much more fellow-Christians, of every civil or religious character, shall be sincerely such as ye owe to yourself, and as, were you in their circumstances, and they in yours, you would think reasonable for them to exercise toward yourself, as partaker of the same human nature, and especially as being of the same Christian community with them.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

15 But if, in defiance of this great commandment of the law, ye, like ravenous wild beasts, rather than Christians, or rational creatures, endued with sentiments of humanity, fight, and quarrel, reproach and abuse each other with as much severity and fierceness as if ye would bite and tear, and eat up one another, there is great reason to fear, lest at length the God of love and peace forsake you, and ye on both sides through mutual heats and feuds, be brought to utter ruin, with relation to your church-state and privileges, and all your best interests.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall

16 My advice then; yea my solemn charge in the name of the Lord Jesus, for preventing these and all  
cris.



shall not fulfil the law of the flesh.

other dreadful eruptions of the body of sin, is, that ye labour, and beg of God to enable you, to live and act in the constant course of your walk with him and conversation in the world, according to the dictates, and under the influence and government of his good Spirit, and of that supernatural principle of grace and holiness, which I trust he has planted in many of your hearts, and which therefore may be also called *Spirit*, (*John* iii. 6.); and this will have such a powerful effect upon you, that ye will not yield yourselves up to the inclinations and propensions of that carnal principle, which still in measure abides with you, and may well be called *flesh*; much less will ye ever be suffered to finish sin, (*καταλείπειν*) in such a manner as would bring forth death. (*Jam.* i. 15.)

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

17 For in regenerate souls, the remainder of in-dwelling corruption struggles against, and vain would suppress the gracious principle and all its holy workings in them, and expel the Spirit of God from them: And on the contrary, the spiritual principle that is wrought in them, by the Holy Ghost, and sides with him, as living and acting under his conduct and assistance, heartily desires (*καθύστεν*) and labours after the mortification and entire destruction of the body of sin: And these two principles, the old and new man, the law of the members and the law of the mind, are directly opposite in their nature, tendencies, and actions, one against the other; insomuch, that thro' the prevailing bias of the better part in you, ye do by no means give into a chosen and deliberate commission of those sins which your remaining corruptions would prompt you to, any more than that, thro' their counter-workings, ye † do not perform the duties ye are called to, with such an entire freedom, constancy, and fervour, as ye ought, and gladly would.

18 But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

18 But if, upon the whole, ye be under the guidance and influence of the Spirit of God, according to the rule of his word, and the principle of that new nature which he has given you; and so, in the habitual frame of your hearts and course of your lives, are led off from the ways of sin into the paths of righteousness, it is evident that ye are not under the law, as a covenant of works, nor under its curse; for ye received not the Spirit by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith, (*ch.* iii. 2.); and there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (*Rom.* viii. 1.)

19, 20.

# NOTE.

† The strict and proper sense of these words (*οὐ ποιῶτε*) is, ye do not; and I see no reason why they should not be so rendered.

9 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

19, 20, 21 Now, if ye would know what are the different operations of these two contrary principles: As to the evil workings that are produced by the corruption of nature, some of which may be called the *filthiness of the flesh*, as they most immediately defile the *body*; and others, the *filthiness of the spirit* \*, as they most immediately defile the *soul*, (2 Cor. vii. 1.) they are too obvious and odious to be concealed, or admit of any colourings to recommend them, and are such as these, whoredom in thought or deed, or both, between married men and women, or at least where one of the parties is so; simple fornication between single persons; impurity or lewdness, and immodesty of every kind; an unchaste, indecent, and wanton temper and behaviour; all idolatrous worship; enchantments, divinations and magic arts by real or pretended converse with familiar spirits; ill-will towards others, together with enmity against God and godliness; litigious contentions; bitter zeal, and rancour; a swelling revengeful temper; scoldings, wranglings, and provocations to evil; a riotous turbulent behaviour to cause dissensions; fundamental errors, obstinately persisted in against the plainest light and evidence; uneasy grudgings at the prosperity of others; maliciously designing, and wilfully accomplishing the death of men without any just cause; drinking strong liquors to excess; gluttonous feasting, ranting and raving; together with many other debaucheries, lusts and passions of a like nature, concerning which I now assure you before-hand, as I also did when I was personally present and preached among you †, that they, who commit any of these crimes, allowing themselves therein, and are not brought to repentance, and recovered from them, shall not be admitted to the inheritance of the saints in God's heavenly kingdom.

22, 23 But, in opposition to these and such sort of detestable works of the flesh, the effects that are produced by the Holy Spirit, and by the principle of divine life under his influence, and that, like the most grateful fruits, are well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ, and profitable to yourselves, are such as these, A universal love to God and Christ, his word and ordinances,

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

#### NOTES.

\* Some of the works, hereafter mentioned, arise principally, if not entirely from the mind, such as idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, heresies, and envyings: and yet are called the *works of the flesh*. We have therefore reason to conclude, that by the *flesh* the apostle does not here mean the body and its sensitive appetites and inclinations only, but the

corruption of human nature, as it spreads through and defiles all the powers of the soul, as well as all the members of the body, by which it discovers itself, and breaks out into overt acts. (See the notes on Rom. vi. 13, 19.)

† These are such *works of the flesh*, as seem to have much abounded among the Galatians and therefore are so particularly specified.

nances, fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures, by which I have told you, (*ver. 6.*) faith works, and proves itself to be sincere; *joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we receive the atonement*, (*Rom. v. 11.*) and rejoicing in the happiness of others, and in contributing towards it; peace of conscience under a sense of peace with God through the blood of Jesus, and a peaceable temper and behaviour towards our Christian-brethren, and towards all men; a patient bearing of affronts and injuries, and long forbearance toward those that offend us; an affable and courteous, harmless, sweet and winning disposition and carriage towards all we have to do with; a benevolent temper and beneficent course of life; fidelity to all the trusts committed to us, as also in our words and promises, and in all our dealings with regard to God and man, as springing from faith in Christ, and in God through him; a meek and humble, calm and quiet frame of spirit, diffusing itself, in imitation of our blessed Lord, through our whole conversation in the world; and a regular government of our passions and appetites, that we may not go into any excess in the pursuit and use of earthly enjoyments. Against such Christians as are possessed of these and the like fruits of the Spirit, there is no law in force to condemn them; because, as has been observed, (*ver. 18.*) these are the persons, that are not under the law to be dealt with according to its strict tenor, and subjected to its curse.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

24 And they that belong to Christ, not only in name and profession, but in truth, as his peculiar property and charge, and as members of his mystical body vitally united to him, interested in him, and devoted to him, are obliged, earnestly endeavour, and have been actually enabled by his Spirit, in virtue of his crucifixion, and in conformity to him therein, to subdue the power of the old man, the body of sin, or the corruption of human nature, that it may not reign in their mortal bodies, (*Rom. vi. 6, 12.*) and to break the force of its grievous and defiling passions, such as *hatred, wrath, and envy*; and of its eager desires after sensual pleasure, such as *drunkenness and uncleanness*, together with all the other works of the flesh, and ungovernable propensions toward them, before-mentioned, (*ver. 19,—21.*) that they, like a crucified man, may be continually losing strength, and gradually lingering more and more till they quite expire.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us

25 If we are indeed quickened and made alive to God by the power of the divine Spirit, let it be our daily prayer,

we also walk in the Spirit.

16 Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

prayer, labour, and concern, to act up to our principles, characters, obligations, and advantages as Christians, by departing from all iniquity, and walking in all holy conversation and godliness, according to the gracious suggestions and assistances he affords us.

26 And as we are indebted to him for all the good that is in us, let none of us over-rate our own endowments or performances, as though we were in ourselves more worthy than others; nor aim at making a vain-glorious shew of them, as those that seek the applause of men, and despise others on account of their lower attainments: Let us not, in violation of the great law of love, (*ver.* 14.) provoke one another to angry resentments; nor give occasion of stirring up envious passions in one against another, on account of his superior advantages of any kind.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Behold the danger of turning aside from the true gospel-doctrine of justification alone by the free grace of God through faith in Christ, and seeking it by the works of the law! This is to lose all benefit by Christ, and to be obliged to keep the whole law as the condition of life, which we never can fulfil. How unhappy is it, that any who seemed to set out well in the Christian faith and profession, should, instead of standing fast in a gospel-freedom from Jewish ceremonies, and from the curse of the law, subject themselves to both! The doctrine of a crucified Christ, and salvation alone by him, is what we must adhere to, amidst all reproaches and persecutions on that account; and they who would introduce pernicious errors, in opposition to it, are such troublers of the church as ought to be cut off from its communion. And, ah! how great is the punishment due to their sin, which sooner or later they must bear; unless God grant them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth! But believers, who are made alive to God by his Spirit, and walk under his conduct and influence, wait with earnest desire and expectation of eternal life (the great object of their hope) on the foot of the righteousness of Christ, through such a faith in him, as works by love. How happy is their state! Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, as considered merely in themselves, can any way affect it; nor is there any sentence of law-condemnation in force against them, they not being under its covenant. But as they are still under the commanding power of the moral law, as a rule of life, how carefully should they guard against turning their holy liberty into an occasion of licentiousness! And with what benevolence should they serve one another in every work of love, which summarily includes all the duties we owe to our neighbour! But if any, under a pretence of zeal for truth and holiness, fall into intemperate heats and quarrels one with another, let them remember what a desperate risk they run of ruining themselves, and the cause of religion together. Would we be preserved from gratifying these, and all other corrupt dispositions, that still too much remain and oppose the principle of grace, in regenerate souls? Let it be our daily prayer, and endeavour to walk under the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, whose blessed fruits lie in direct opposition to all the works of the flesh, any of which, being indulged and persisted in, will certainly exclude a man from the kingdom of heaven. But they that are indeed united to Christ, through faith in him, have gained such a victory over the corruption of nature, and all its evil motions and appetites, that, like a crucified man, it is ready to expire in them. And if we have any good hope that, through the Spirit's operations, this is our case, how highly doth it become us to take heed of assuming honour to ourselves, or vaunting of our attainments; and so provoking some to wrath, as being despised; and others to envy, as being out-done by us!

## C H A P. VI.

The apostle proceeds in exhortations to meekness, gentleness, and humility, 1,—5. To a generous maintenance of ministers, and beneficence towards all men, but especially toward professing believers, 6,—10. Sums up the main design of his epistle, for guarding the Galatians against their judaizing teachers that wanted them to be circumcised for selfish ends, directly contrary to his own in preaching a crucified Christ, 11,—17.; and concludes with a solemn benediction, 18.

## TEXT.

**B**rethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**Ccording to the rule of Christian charity, which I have laid down, (*chap. v. 13, 14, 15, 22, &c.*) If any one among you, my brethren, fall into an erroneous notion or immoral act, like one catch'd by surprize before he was aware, (*πρῶτον*) through unwatchfulness, ignorance, human frailty, plausible insinuations, the example of others, or the power of temptation, I beseech those of you that are more advanced and confirmed in knowledge and grace, (*see the note on 1 Cor. ii. 15.*) to do your utmost to reduce such an one, like a dislocated member, (*καταρτίσει*) to his proper place in the body of Christ, by informing his judgment, and dealing closely with his conscience, for bringing him to repentance; not in a rough and angry way of treating him, but with such meekness and patience, tenderness and compassion in your temper and behaviour, as may convince him that what ye do to reclaim him, proceeds not from passion or prejudice, but merely from an affectionate concern for the glory of God, and the good of his own soul: And to induce every one of you hereunto, reflect seriously on your own infirmities, while you dwell in mortal flesh, and carry a body of sin about with you; and consider the danger you are in, lest, while you are too severe upon others, God should leave you to fall by temptation into the like, or some other evil, as bad, or worse,

<sup>2</sup> Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> In this manner, instead of imposing heavy yokes on one hand, or refusing any offices of kindness on the other, see to it, that ye sympathize and bear with, pray for and assist each other, especially when any are troubled in spirit for what they have done amiss; and endeavour to support the weak, (*1 Thes. v. 14.*) to lighten and relieve one anothers loads and grievances, trials and exercises of every kind; and so put that excellent law of love into practice, which has been already mention'd, (*chap. v. 14.*) and which our Lord himself

himself has recommended, as summarily comprehending all the duties of the second table of the law, (*Matth. xxii. 39, 40.*)

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

3 For if any one hath high thoughts of his own attainments, as though he were sufficient of himself to resist temptation, and do great things in religion; and so despises and insults others, while at the same time he is really destitute of what he pretends to, he dreadfully deceives his own soul.

4 So let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

4 But that none may be forward to judge and censure others, nor be sadly mistaken about himself, let every one narrowly search into, try and prove his own principles, motives and ends, temper and behaviour, that he may form a right judgment concerning them; and if, upon serious examination, they appear to be according to the truth of the gospel, and his holy profession of it, he then will have great matter of rejoicing, even unto a humble glorying, (*καυχόμενος*) not in taking any honour to himself, but within his own soul, on account of what God has wrought in him, and enabled him to do; and on account of the witness which his own conscience and the Holy Spirit bear to his sincerity, and to God's approving and accepting him and his services, thro' Jesus Christ. And having this delightful consciousness in himself, he need not be solicitous about the good opinion and applause of others, or about glorying in them as his profelytes; nor doth his happiness at all depend upon what he is in a mere comparison of himself with others of a worse character, or upon what esteem they have of him; since *he who judges him is the Lord.* (*1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.*)

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

5 For as every one must give an account of himself to God, (*Rom. xiv. 12*); so he will be judged and dealt with for happiness, or misery, in that awful day, not according to what he is in comparison with, or in the opinion of others, nor according to any over-weening thoughts of his own concerning himself; but only according to what he really is, and shall then be found to be in heart and life before God.

6 Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

6 In order to your being acquainted with, and established in these important things, there is need of a standing ministry; and as it is equitable in itself, and the Lord Jesus has ordain'd that *they, who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel,* (*1 Cor. ix. 14.*) let no differences among you prevent your supporting his faithful servants in their work; but let him that has the benefit of being taught the truth, as it is in Jesus, and especially him that has been effectually taught of God

by this means, contribute cheerfully and liberally, according to his worldly substance, to the comfortable maintenance of the minister that spends his time and pains in preaching the gospel to him, which brings better blessings than all the good things of this life.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

7 Let none of you be deluded or misled by any plausible suggestions, or by your own covetous tempers, as if this, or any other instances of liberality, as occasions require, were not your duty. How much soever a man may prevaricate, to the deceiving of himself, or others, the great God, who sees your hearts, and has a supreme right to your obedience, will not suffer himself to be imposed upon, or treated with a contempt or neglect of any of his commandments, under fallacious pretences of obeying them: For, to speak in the language of a metaphor, taken from the ordinary course of providence in the works of nature, a man's reaping shall be according to the goodness or badness of what he sows.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

8 For as in the natural world the husbandman reaps the fruits of the earth, according to the different kinds of seed he has sown; so in the moral and spiritual world, every man will receive the fruit of his doings, answerable to their nature and quality; insomuch that he who, like a sower of bad seed, lays out his temporal enjoyments, or spends his time and strength, with selfish and corrupt views, shall reap the sad and rotten fruit of such a carnal temper and conduct, in only perishing acquisitions here, and endless destruction hereafter: But, on the contrary, he who, thro' the power of divine grace, employs his earthly substance, and improves his various talents, like a sower of good seed, for promoting spiritual things, in subservience to the work and design of the Spirit of God, agreeable to his holy nature and will, as revealed in his word, shall reap glorious fruit unto holiness in this world, the end of which shall be *eternal life* in the next, as *the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom. vi. 22, 23.)

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

9 Being animated by this comfortable view and prospect, let us take heed, that, like people weary of their enterprizes, we do not grow remiss and negligent about, much less cease from, doing good to others by any means that we may be capable of: For we shall certainly have a plentiful harvest of blessings in proper time, if not in this world, yet at the resurrection of the just, in case we do not, through unbelief and discouragement, covetousness and impatience, or some other

other

other evil principle, desist from our duty, as counting it an irksome task; but persevere in it to the end.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

10 While therefore God, by his providence, gives us abilities, and proper opportunities and occasions, Let us labour and exercise ourselves (*τοραξουμένης*) in every work of beneficence towards the necessitous, and all our fellow-creatures, without restraining it, like the *Jews*, to those of our own religion and nation; and yet this ought to be done most especially, with care and delight, to those, who, in the judgment of charity, have cordially embraced the faith of Christ, and are brought into his church and family, as his domestics and children of his household, (*Eph. ii. 19.*)

11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

11 Now, to draw to a close, ye see, and pray observe, my brethren, what important things I have wrote; and to how great a length, in my abundant zeal and concern for you, I have stretched this letter, and that not by the assistance of an amanuensis, which I mostly make use of, but all of it with mine own hand writing\*.

12 As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

12 As to all those that would pervert you, whatever their figure and pretences be, or how much soever they be ambitious of recommending themselves to the favour of men, by external flourishing professions of religion, and zealous observations of ceremonial rites and carnal ordinances, which sanctify only to the purifying of the flesh, (*Heb. ix. 13.*) their chief and governing end in so strenuously insisting on the necessity of your being circumcised, (though many of you never were under the *Mosaic* law) is not out of any love to you, or concern for your salvation; but only that they themselves may escape the persecutions and reproaches which the furious unbelieving *Jews* would bring upon them, were they to hold, that faith in a crucified Saviour is sufficient for justification, without joining to it an observation of the law of *Moses*. (See the preface to this epistle, and the note on *chap. iv. 11.*)

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but

13 For these very zealots that have been circumcised, and thereby, in effect, obliged to keep the whole of the *Mosaic* law, as ever they would be justified by it, (*chap.*

#### N O T E.

\* The verb (*ἔγραψα*) ye see, may be rendered in the imperative as well as indicative mood. And how large a letter I have wrote (*ἡ μεγάλη γραμμή ἣν ἔγραψα*) may probably signify not only the length of the epistle, but likewise the important matter contained in it. (See Mr Pyle's note on the place.) However, the apostle mentions his writing it *with his own hand* to shew his zealous concern for them;

because, as seems from *Rom. xvi. 22.* & *Cor. xvi. 21.* and *2 Thes. iii. 17.* he usually either dictated his epistles, and some other person wrote them; or, if he wrote the originals, others transcribed them, and then he sent the copies to the churches, attested by his own hand to be genuine. (See the note on *Rom. xvi. 22.*)



but desire to have you circumcised, that they might glory in your flesh.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

(chap. v. 3.); even they themselves do not come up to its high demands of moral duties\*, how strict and zealous soever they may be for observing its ceremonial rites and ordinances; nor indeed are they so much concerned about the first, as about the last: But they would fain have you brought under the bond of circumcision, that they may boast of you as their proselytes from among the *Gentiles*; and so make a merit with the carnal *Jews* of your being circumcised in the flesh thro' their instigation, and thereby obliged to observe the law in its full extent for justification to eternal life.

14 But as to myself, far be it from me, 'tis a detestable thought in my account, that I, like them, should be ambitious of human applause, or boast of what I have done, or rely on any thing as the ground of acceptance with God; except it be on the atoning sacrifice of our crucified Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for whom I am willing to suffer the loss of all things, &c. (*Phil.* iii. 8, 9.) Such is my entire dependence on this, my triumph in it, and expectation from it, that by faith in him, and by virtue derived from him, and in conformity to him, as crucified, I am dead to all the allurements, interests, ease, and honours of this world on one hand, and all its terrors, persecutions, and reproaches on the other, so as not to be moved by them, (*Acts* xx. 24.): And it is on account of my preaching the pure doctrine of salvation alone by the cross of Christ, without any mixture of the works of the law, that men of a worldly spirit, who are chiefly governed by secular interests, are dead in their affections toward me, despise and hate me, and would be glad to crucify me, as they did my dear Redeemer.

15 For with regard to union with Christ, and justification to life, through faith in him, a man's being circumcised, or not circumcised, considering these things barely in themselves, is of no manner of account, as all distinctions of that kind under the New-Testament-dispensation are at an end. The great thing that belongs to, and is necessary for proving our interest in him is, that we be indeed created in Christ Jesus un-

#### N O T E.

\* These Judaizing Christians were zealous for circumcision and all other ceremonial ordinances; and therefore when the apostle says, that *they themselves did not keep the law*, he seems to have his eye principally on the moral law, in obedience to which they were fully defective, and yet were unduly as much obliged by circumcision to attend to, as they could be to external rites of ceremony, if they would pretend to be justified by

the works of the law: And as he mentions this by way of censure upon those zealots, for not sincerely acting up to their own pretences, it seems too jejune to suppose, with *Force*, that their *not keeping the law* only means that they, being in *Galatia*, could not regularly observe the *Jewish* feasts, or offer sacrifice, or cleanse themselves from their defilements by touching any thing that was unclean.

to good works, (Eph. ii. 10.) or be formed anew in our principles, temper and designs; and so brought to deal with God for all acceptance, and to walk in all holiness before him, according to the tenor of the gospel, in an exercise of that *faith which works by love*, (ch. v. 6.)

15 And, as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

16 And as many professing Christians, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as shall walk orderly, (*τακτοποιῶσι*) and within the boundaries of the rule which has been laid down in this epistle, with respect to the grounds of acceptance with God, the right use of Christian liberty, the law of love, and the new creature, without any regard to circumcision or uncircumcision, I earnestly pray with assured confidence, that all the blessings of peace with God, with one another, and in their own consciences, and all the kindness and tender compassion, that wretched sinful creatures stand in need of, even every good thing that can be included in *peace* and *mercy*, may be richly bestowed by the God of all grace upon them, and upon all sincere believers; and I authoritatively pronounce all these blessings upon them, who, in distinction from *Israelites* only after the flesh, are the true and spiritual *Israel*, which God has formed for himself, and receives and owns for his peculiar church and people, through his Son.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

17 Upon the whole then, after all that has been said in this epistle, let no one give me any further trouble, by disputes and quarrels about circumcision and other observances of the law, or by injuriously reproaching me, as though I had sometimes preached them up as necessary things: For many are the persecutions which I have already endured; and to this very day I carry about in my mortal body the visible scars of those stripes, wounds, and bonds, (*Acts* xx. 23. and *2 Cor.* iv. 10, and xi. 23, 24.) which I have suffer'd for the sake of, and in conformity to my crucified Lord and Saviour, as evident marks of my being his devoted servant, and proofs of my faithful adherence to, and zeal for promoting the pure gospel-doctrine of justification alone thro' faith in him.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be with your spirit. Amen.

18 To conclude, brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is, that his free love and favour, together with all its blessed manifestations, fruits and effects, may plentifully abound toward you, and sensibly rest upon your souls, to lead you in the way of faith, comfort and holiness, till ye shall arrive at the complete possession of everlasting life. In testimony of my sincerity herein, and of my hope with respect hereunto, I cordially say, *Amen*.

## RECOLLECTIONS.

With what meekness and humility, compassion and sympathy, should Christians of superior attainments labour to recover their brethren that have been overtaken with a fault through infirmity and temptation ! To induce them to this, let them consider that, in the present state of human frailty, they themselves are liable to slips and falls; and that though they be delivered from the ceremonial law, and from the covenant of works and its curse, they are still under the moral law to Christ, who enjoins all obedience to it, and every office of love one towards another. How dreadful is it to deceive one's own soul, thro' self-conceit or hypocritical mockeries of God, who neither will nor can be imposed upon ! But what a noble pleasure has a man in himself, when, upon close trial, his conscience bears him witness, that he is approved of God in Christ ; and is enabled to prove his own faithfulness in the management of his worldly enjoyments for supporting a gospel-ministry, and doing good, as opportunities offer, to all men, and especially those that belong to the household of faith ! And O how solemn is the thought, that in the judgment of the great day every one must reap the fruit of his own ways, whether of sin unto death, or of holiness unto everlasting life ! What signifies making a fair show of religion, in outward appearances, if our hearts and ends are wrong. and we are so fond of the favour and applause of men as to be afraid or ashamed to own a crucified Christ, and the doctrine of salvation alone by him, lest we should suffer reproaches and persecutions on that account ! But they are Christians indeed, and ought not to be suspected to be otherwise who can glory in the cross of Christ, as the only ground of all acceptance with God, and who by virtue derived from him are as dead to the world as the men of this world can be to them. Whatever be our professions, denominations and external privileges, nothing will turn to our saving advantage, unless we be new creatures and have that faith which works by love. But grace, mercy, and peace, will be upon all *Israelites* indeed, who walk by rule, according to the gospel, in their dealings with God and man. The Lord Jesus himself will freely bless them; and his servants cannot but heartily wish that they may be abundantly blessed, and in hope of it say, *Amen.*

A P R A C

A PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
Apostle PAUL's Epistle  
TO THE  
EPHESIANS,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the EPISTLE to the EPHESIANS.

**E**PHESUS was the metropolis of the proconsular *Asia*, which was a part of the province that went by the name of *Asia the less*. Here stood the celebrated temple of *Diana*, which was called one of the seven wonders of the world; and the inhabitants of this city were on the one hand eminent for human wisdom and learning and on the other remarkably infamous for idolatry, lasciviousness, and magical arts, as appears from *chap. v. 5.* and *Acts xix. 19.* And yet from among persons of these characters, sovereign grace raised a church, the greatest part of which were *Gentiles*, by the ministry of the apostle *Paul*, who continued preaching to them about *three years*, *Acts xx. 31.*

Some time afterwards he took a journey that way, and sent for the elders of this church to *Miletus*, where, among other things, he appealed to them, that he had diligently and affectionately laboured among them, and kept back nothing that was profitable to them; but had testified both to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God: He then charged them to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, telling them by the spirit of prophecy, that grievous wolves would enter in among them not sparing the flock, and that of their own selves many would arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, &c. *Acts xx. 17,—30.* And the account we have of this church, *Rev. ii. 1,—6.* shews how sadly this prediction was verified.

To guard them therefore against those seducers, which, perhaps, by this time began to appear amongst them; and to confirm them in the faith, which he had preached and they had received, he wrote this

epistle,

epistle, in which he gave them an *epitome* of that gospel which he had preached to them more at large, with respect to the important doctrine of God's free love and grace, particularly in election and effectual calling, which he illustrates and enhances from a consideration of what they were by nature before conversion, and of the glorious blessings which they were made partakers of through the gospel, chap. i. ii. iii. These contain the *doctrinal* part of the epistle, which he delivers in sublime, moving, and rapturous strains, like one whose heart was deeply impressed and delighted, and almost overcome with the great things he was speaking of; and then, according to his usual method, he proceeds in the three last chapters to the *practical* part, in which he exhorts them to various duties, civil and religious, personal and relative, suitable to their Christian character, privileges, assistances, and obligations.

Dr *Mills*, in his *prolegomena* to the New Testament, p. 9. and some others both before and after him suppose, that this epistle was written to the *Laodiceans*, and that the apostle ordered a copy of it to be sent to the *Ephesian* church, and so it came to be very early called the epistle to the saints at *Ephesus*; others suppose that it was a sort of general epistle for the use of such *Gentile-Christians*, especially those of *Asia*, of whose conversion the apostle had only heard. But as the principal doctrines of this epistle agree with the account he gave the *elders* of *Ephesus* of what he had preached to them, and suit the design of fortifying them against the errors he foretold would spring up among them, *Acts* xx. 20,—29, (see Dr *Whitby's* preface, and Dr *Goodwin's* preface concerning this epistle, p. 3.) and as all the ancient copies and versions, that are come to our hand, read at *Ephesus*, and none of them at *Laodicea*, the laboured arguments of these learned gentlemen seem not to be fully conclusive; and the passages in the epistle itself, on which they are founded, will be considered, as they occur in the course of the exposition: However, the epistle might be wrote to *Ephesus*, not only for the immediate use of the church there, but likewise of other churches in *Asia*, of which *Laodicea* was one; accordingly some have thought that they are included in the latter part of the inscription, which is indefinitely *to the faithful in Christ Jesus*: Chap. i. 1. And if it was written with a particular view to the *Laodiceans*, as well as the *Ephesians*, it might possibly be sometimes called the epistle to the *Laodiceans*, as some suppose it is, *Col.* iv. 16. (See the note there.) But as this is a matter of little or no moment, we may be very easy about it, since it is agreed, on all hands, that it was wrote by the inspired apostle *Paul*, and is of equal use to us, whether it was written immediately to the *Ephesians*, or any other church.

As to the time when this epistle was wrote, it is concluded to be, as some think, about the year of our Lord 58 or 59, or as others 62. However, it is certain that this and the epistle to the *Colossians* are a sort of twin-epistles, as they were dictated or wrote about the same time, and on much the same subjects, and so cast light one upon the other; and both were wrote when the apostle was a prisoner at *Rome*:

For in this epistle, chap. iii. 1. and iv. 1. he calls himself *the prisoner of Christ Jesus, and the prisoner of the Lord*; and in that to the *Colossians*, chap. iv. 18. he speaks of himself as *in bonds*. Accordingly it has been observed, that what he wrote in those circumstances had the greatest relish and savour of the things of God, which eminently appears in these two epistles, and in that to the *Philippians*, which was also wrote in prison, and about the same time.

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle prefates his epistle, as usual, with an inscription and salutation, ver. 1, 2. Gives a general account of saving blessings in a way of thanksgiving and praise, 3. Enlarges upon them, as prepared in God's eternal election, as purchased by Christ's blood, and as convey'd in effectual calling, 4,—10. Applies all this, first to the believing Jews, and then to the believing Gentiles, 11,—14. Thanks God for what he had heard of their faith and love, and prays for the continuance of their knowledge and hope, with respect to the heavenly inheritance, and to God's powerful working in them, answerable to what had been wrought in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, 15,—23.*

### TEXT.

**P**AUL an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus :

### PARAPHRASE.

**I** PAUL, who have the honour of being an apostle of Jesus Christ, (see the note on *Rom. i. 1.*) immediately sent forth, authorised and qualified by him, to publish his glorious gospel, and am called to this important office according to the sovereign will of God, who of his own mere favour appointed me to it, I, in the execution of this high trust, send this epistle under divine inspiration \* to those Christians at *Ephesus*, who, as members of the church there, are by profession, and, as I trust, really renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; and to those believers there, or elsewhere, that have obtained mercy to be faithful to their light and obligations, in their adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus

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\* And to the faithful (*οἱ πιστοὶ* without the article) might be translated *even* to the faithful; for the particle (*οἱ*) rendered *and*, frequently signifies *even* in the New Testament, when it comes between two nouns, the first of which has the article and the other not, as may be seen in many instances, where 'tis sometimes translated *and*, at others *even*, as in *ver. 3. Rom. xv. 6. 2 Cor. i. 3. and xi. 32. Phil. iv. 20. Col. ii. 2. 2 Theff. ii. 16. 1 Peter i. 3.* and several other places: And the word here rendered *the faithful* signifies also *believing*, or *believers*, or them which *believe*, and is often so translated, as in *John*

*xx. 27. Acts x. 35. 2 Cor. vi. 15. 1 Tim. iv. 3, 10, 12. and v. 16. and vi. 2.* and so may intimate that faith and holiness go together, or that all true believers are real saints, or holy persons: But some have thought that *and to the faithful in Christ Jesus* is added by way of intimation, that the epistle was directed to the rest of the believers in the Lesser Asia, as well as to those at *Ephesus*; and whether this were the apostle's immediate intention or not, he doubtless designed it for their use, and for the use of all the churches of Christ in succeeding ages.

fus, and by virtue of their union with him, the only Saviour, from whom all their faith and faithfulness is derived, and in whom 'tis acceptable to God.

2 Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 May all the riches of divine grace, as consisting of the free favour of God, (see the note on *Rom. i. 7.*) and all its happy fruits, manifestations, and effects, which may be summed up in peace with him, with one another, and in your own souls, and is the peace that passeth all understanding, (*Phil. iv. 7.*) May all this, together with every kind of prosperity, abound towards each and every one of you here, till it be compleated in eternal felicity hereafter, from our covenant-God and Father in Christ, as the fountain and first moving cause, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself, as the purchaser and disposer of all the blessings that are comprehended in the peace which he bequeathed to his disciples when he was going to the Father, (*Jahn xiv. 27.*)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

3 All possible honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise are infinitely due, and are cheerfully paid by me and ought to be so by you, to the ever-blessed God \*, whose most endearing title formerly was that of the God of *Abraham* and *Isaac* and *Jacob*, but who has now revealed himself under the still more encouraging and delightful character of God, even the Father, in the highest and most peculiar sense, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, his only begotten and eternal Son, and the Divine Mediator between him and us, who in the immense riches of his love and grace to those of us whether *Jews* or *Gentiles* † that are *saints* and *faithful*

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\* God's blessing us is his conferring all spiritual and heavenly blessings upon us in his peculiar love to us, which distinguishes it from his bestowing only spiritual gifts and providential favours, in a way of common goodness, which are not always blessings to those that have them; but our blessing God is only paying our solemn, grateful, and honourable acknowledgments of him, and ascribing glory to him, from the affection we bear to him, and the delight we have in him, on account of his own blessedness, and of the blessings which he confers upon us; and so our blessing him is not only distinguished from his blessing us, but likewise from those praises that redound, or are offered to God, but do not proceed from love to him as the principle of them. Thus 'tis said, *Psal. cxi. 10.* that *all his works praise him, and his saints bless him*, because they only have such a love to God as gives them pleasure in the thoughts of his glory, and in their ascriptions of it to

him. Here again the particle *and* (see the note on *ver. 1.*) may be taken *exagetically*, as signifying even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if we consider these as distinct characters, according to the view that our Lord himself gives of them, who ordered *Mary Magdalen* to say to his brethren, *I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God*, *John xx. 17.* (see the paraphrase there,) the matter is to be considered thus: The Father is Christ's God as *man* and *mediator*, and one in covenant with him, who was his hope and strength in every difficulty and danger, and gave him his reward; and he is his Father primarily with respect to his *divine nature*, as his only begotten Son, and secondarily with respect to his *human nature*, as that is personally united with the divine, and to comes into the relation of a higher sonship to the Father, than can belong to any mere creature whatever.

† I cannot see sufficient reason to think, with

ful in Christ Jesus, (ver. 1.) has freely and bountifully bestowed upon us, not only some, but all, and all manner of spiritual blessings, that are heavenly in their nature, original, and tendency, and shall be compleated in the heavenly mansions †. They are already enjoyed in their beginnings and earnest by us, and are secured and taken possession of in heaven for us, in and by Jesus Christ, as our head and Saviour, and the only purchaser of them, and grand medium of their conveyance to us.

4 According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love :

4 All this took its rise and was prepared in the eternal counsel of God, wherein he eminently and in a distinguishing manner blessed us by a free grant of it all to us \* ; and 'tis brought to pass according to, and in performance of his gracious and unchangeable purpose, even as he of his own mere love and favour has made a sovereign choice of us in and together with Christ, as our great head and representative, who as such is stiled by way of eminence, *his elect*, (Isa. lxi. 1.); which choice was made before the *foundation of the earth was laid*, even from all eternity : And this he has done, not because he foresaw that we would be holy, but that we might be so by a work of renewing grace begun

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with some commentators, that *blessed* as ought to be entirely confined to the *Gentiles*, and that merely in a *national* consideration of them : For the apostle here, and in several following verses, includes, together with himself, all those whom he had stiled *the saints at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus*, and had saluted, as inclu. in the two immediately preceding verses : and tho' the church at Ephesus mostly consisted of *Gentile-believers*, and the grace of God to them is considered particularly and at large in several parts of the epistle ; yet there were some of the *Jews* for : among them, as may be gathered from Acts xviii. 19, 20, 24, &c. ; and this was commonly the case of all the churches of the Lesser Asia, and particularly of this church, whether it were the church at Ephesus, or not, as appears from ver. 12. of this chapter, where the apostle speaks of those among them that *first trusted in Christ*, in distinction from the *Gentile* part of them ; and chap. iii. 16, 18. he mentions *Jews and Gentiles*, as being both *renewed to God in one body by the cross of Christ* ; and say, *through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father* : And surely, *we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others*, (ch. ii. 3.) can never be meant merely of the *Gentiles*, since the only doubt could be, whether the *Jews* were by nature children of wrath, as well as *Gentiles* : and

not whether the *Gentiles* were by nature the children of wrath, as well as the *Jews*. And as the apostle often *varies* the person in this epistle, sometimes speaking in the first person plural *we*, and as ; and at others in the second, *ye* and *you* ; it will hardly be found that he ever uses the pronoun *we* and *us* in any passage that could not belong to himself and the believing *Jews*, while *ye* and *you* frequently relate to things peculiar to the *Gentiles* ; though, some few times, to things that were common to both.

† The words *in heavenly places* (ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) signify *in the heavens*, and so may relate either to *place* or *things*, in opposition to the carnal privileges of the *Jews*, and their notions of earthly blessings in the Messiah's kingdom.

\* God's *choosing us* may be considered, either as one instance of all those spiritual blessings wherewith he hath blessed us, or as a model or plat-form in his own eternal mind, according to which he has blessed us with the other blessings ; for the word (κατὰ) *even*, or *according as*, fairly admits of both those senses ; and the apostle's saying this, inclusive of himself, who was a *Jew*, shews that God's eternal choice was not of *Gentiles* nationally considered, but was of *persons* from among the *Jews*, as well as from among the *Gentiles*.



begun here, and to be perfected hereafter, he having *chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience*, (2 Thess. ii. 13. and 1 Pet. i. 2.) and that our holiness might not be in outward appearance only, but in sincerity and truth; such as is without hypocrisy and deceit, and, at length, shall be entirely sinless, without exception, in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart; and such as in great measure consists of as well as proceeds from, that love unto God and one another, which works in us as under his all-seeing eye, and inclines us to keep his commandments without counting them grievous. And all this is the fruit of his love to us, who *bath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* (2 Tim. i. 9.)

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

5 And God, in the same eternal decree, whereby he graciously separated us from the rest of mankind †, has fore-ordained us to the dignity of adoption into his family, that we might be brought into the relation of sons and heirs to God, and joint-heirs with Christ; and so might have a right to the heavenly inheritance, and to all the honours, privileges, and blessings that belong to his children; some of which are to be enjoyed in this world, till they shall issue in all the glories of our adoption, that shall be consummated, both in soul and body, *at the manifestation of the sons of God*, in and for ever after their resurrection from the dead, (Rom. viii. 19, 23.): Which glorious adoption is designed and brought to pass, through our union with Jesus Christ, his eternal and only-begotten Son, that we might be brethren to him, and he might be glorified in and by us, as he is the *first-born among many brethren, to whose image we are predestinated to be conformed*, and who in all things has the pre-eminence, (Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 18.); and that we, thro' him, \* might be brought to the most intimate union and communion with, and enjoyment of God himself, as a peculiar people appropriated and consecrated to him, and *formed for himself, that we might shew forth his praise*, (Isa. xliii. 21.) All which entirely proceeds from, and is owing, not to any worthiness in us, nor to any necessity or obligation that

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† God's choosing us in Christ, as our common head, may relate to his singling us out in his love from others, whom he passed by or left to themselves; and some, putting a stop after, *before him*, join in love, at the close of the last verse, to the beginning of this; and his predestinating us may relate to

the great and glorious things to which he chose us in Christ, that we, as the children of God, might have all blessedness and honour in and through him.

\* *To himself*, or as it might be rendered to him (*in eo*) may refer either to Christ, or to God the Father. A 2 2

that lay upon him, but merely to that free determination of his own sovereign will and pleasure, which moved him to it, and which he takes the greatest complacency in, above all the other purposes of his heart as he *delights in mercy*, (Mic. vii. 18.)

¶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved :

6 His ultimate end in all this was \* that, as his great *goodness, benignity, or kindness*, is that perfection of his nature which sheds a glory upon all the rest, and which he rejoices in with peculiar delight, and on account of which he is infinitely amiable in himself, and worthy of all possible honour, blessing, and praise ; so it might be illustriously manifested and displayed in the most endearing manner to the objects of his love, as superlatively and adorably glorious ; and revenues of admiration, blessing, and praise might be paid to his great name for it, who by the free determination and exercise of his grace, has rendered us acceptable to himself, as his children, in and through his first, and best, and eminently Beloved, even his own emphatically *dear Son*, (Col. i. 13.) in whom he is well-pleased, and for whose sake, and on whose account, he is so with us, as we are looked upon and considered in him, (Mat. iii. 17.)

† In whom we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ;

7 In this beloved Son, as our Head and Redeemer, and by virtue of our union with him, we, whom God has chosen, predestinated and accepted in him, (ver. 4, 5, 6.) have a compleat and glorious deliverance from all evil, and a recovery to all blessedness, and that at the † inestimable price of his own precious blood which he

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\* Here is a noble, beautiful and affecting gradation *from his grace, to the glory of his grace, and from the glory of his grace, to the praise of its glory.*

† Several interpreters of no small note have observed that the *tense* is here changed from the *past* to the *present*, which they suppose is to distinguish the blessings here mentioned, as what we receive in time, from those that were spoken of in the preceding verse, as what was done in God's gracious acts concerning us from all eternity. But though this may be allowed, with regard to the blessings mentioned, (ver. 4, 5.) yet I much doubt whether there be any solid ground for this observation, as it relates to God's having *made us accepted in the Beloved*, which is the last thing mentioned before the alteration of the *tense* ; for in the next following verses, 8, 9, 11. the apostle resumes the *past tense*, where he says, *God has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mysteries of his will ; and we have obtained an inheritance in*

*Christ*, all which, as these interpreters themselves allow, relate to the blessings bestowed in time, as much as our *having redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins*, can be supposed to do.—As to the nature of this redemption, we may observe that the scripture sometimes speaks of redemption *by power*, as when God said he would *redeem Israel from their Egyptian bondage with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgements*, (Exod. vi. 6.) ; but at other times it speaks of redemption *by price*, as when the *houses and lands of Israel* were to be redeemed by a proper price paid for them ; and when a poor *Israelite* who had sold himself to a stranger, was to be redeemed by his kinsman's *paying the price of his sale*. (See Lev. xxv. 23,—51.) And what the apostle here speaks of is manifestly *redemption by price* ; for that is the primitive signification of the word (ἀνταποδοσις) here used, which is elsewhere called *Christ's having obtained eternal redemption (ἀνταποδοσιν) by his own blood*, (Heb. ix. 12.) ; and is expressed by his giving his life

he shed at his Father's call, in the most terrible manner, for the satisfaction of his law and justice in a way of atonement for sin; so that on this account, in conjunction with all his sufferings and obedience which were finished at his death, we have free and full forgiveness of all trespasses, (Col. ii. 13.) which includes, or draws after it, a deliverance from the curse of the law and the wrath of God, from the power of sin and Satan, and from the sting of death, together with a recovery to all possible happiness and glory in our whole persons which shall be perfectly enjoyed at the redemption of our bodies: And these, as well as all the rest of the fore-mentioned benefits, are not from any desert or worthiness in us, but merely from the inexhaustible fulness, excellence, liberality, and boundless overflowings of the free mercy and favour of God the Father †, as he of his own good pleasure contrived, appointed, gave, and accepted of Christ; who also, in the greatness of his love graciously consented to lay down his life for our ransom, without so much as our knowing or desiring it: And God has graciously appointed and revealed this, and laid out the way and method of freely making over all the benefit of it to us in a way of believing, and has freely given us faith therein, on Christ's account, for our own salvation, (chap. ii. 8.)

‡ Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

§ In the breaking forth and over-flowings of this rich grace, as from its fountain-fulness, God has abundantly manifested to us the highest wisdom and counsel in

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(ἀνταναστήσας) a ransom or price of redemption for many; that is, by his dying in their room and stead for their deliverance from all their captivity, bondage, and miseries, which sin had subjected them to. Accordingly it is here called redemption through Christ's blood; and answerable hereunto, we are said to be bought with a price, (1 Cor. vi. 20.) and what this price is we are told, when it is said ye were redeemed (ἀνταναστήσας) not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, (1 Pet. i. 18. 19.); and in the passage before us, they that are made accepted in the Beloved, ver. 6. are said to have redemption in him, as in their public head and representative, sponsor, and surety, who has actually paid down the price of it for them, and is, and for ever will be, the subject of all its glory, and of all that merit and efficacy, whereby they are made partakers of it, to the forgiveness of their sins in virtue of their union with him.

† The riches of his grace may indeed by the construction refer to Christ, who is the nearest antecedent; and therefore I have glanced at it in the paraphrase: But 'tis more generally, and I think most properly, referred to the Father; because the glory of his

grace had been spoken of in the verse next before it; and 'tis he that is meant in the progress of the discourse, as the person who bestows all the farther blessings, mentioned in the three following verses: And though the endearing love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding and abundant in redeeming us to God by his blood; yet all the blessings of salvation are most usually thro' the scripture, and particularly in this epistle, ascribed to the Father's grace, as their original source and fountain: And the riches of his grace are very consistent with Christ's paying the full price of our redemption for the reason assigned in the paraphrase, by which it appears that, how dear soever it cost Christ, 'tis all entirely free, without the least expence to us, or motive taken from any good in us; and the riches of the grace of God are magnified in much higher and more affecting strains, by its most freely providing for an honourable forgiveness of our sins at so costly and self-denying a rate, as by delivering his own eternal, dearly beloved son in our nature to the world of deaths, than if it had been granted by a mere act of sovereign prerogative, without any regard to the rights or satisfaction of justice.

contriving and executing his eternal scheme for advancing the glory of all his perfections, that his holiness, truth, and justice, together with every other attribute of the divine nature, might concur and harmonize with his grace in saving us through Christ's redemption, (*ver. 7.*) \* And, in this his abundant grace, he has given to us, at our conversion, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of himself and of his Son, (*ver. 17.*) *whom to know is life eternal*, (John xvii. 3.) and has made our love to abound in knowledge and in all judgment, *that we may approve things that are excellent*, (Phil. i. 9, 10.); and that the benefits of his own love and of Christ's purchase might be effectually applied to us through faith, whereby we are brought to trust in Christ, (*ver. 12, 13.*) are made *wise to salvation*, (2 Tim. iii. 15.) and are taught to know, regard, and practise our duty with understanding and discretion.

9 All this wisdom and prudence has God discovered and conveyed to us, by means of the gospel-revelation, and by the attending illumination of his Spirit in our hearts, as he therein has opened to us his gracious scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ for lost sinners of all sorts, and of what nation soever; which may be called a *mystery*, because it was from all eternity hid as an impenetrable secret in God's own breast, (*chap. iii. 9.*) and was but obscurely hinted in the dark types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament, compared with the brighter and fuller revelation that is now made of it to the saints, (*Col. i. 26.*); and it is such a great *mystery of godliness*, and contains such *unsearchable riches of Christ*, that notwithstanding the gospel-revelation, it still is hid from unbelievers, whose minds the god of this world has blinded, (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.); and has breadths, and lengths, and depths, and heights, that surpass all the knowledge of true believers themselves, (*Ephes. iii. 18, 19.* See the note on 1 Cor. ii. 7.) And it may be called the *mystery of his will*, because it took its rise merely from his own sovereign will according to his free determination, as seemed good in his sight. (*Mat. xi. 27.* and *Luke x. 21.*) And this he resolved upon from all eternity for his own glory, without the least motive or inducement from any other whatsoever.

10 That in the last dispensation of God's grace under the gospel-state, which may be called *the dispensation of the fulness of times*, because it is a completion of

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\* All wisdom and prudence in this verse may relate either to God, in his scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, and discovery of it by the gospel, and in his dealings toward

believers; or may relate to them, in what he has wrought in them. The connection with *ver. 7.* may lead us to the *first*, and with *ver. 9.* to the *last* of these.

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself;

10 That, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in

in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him :

of the various seasons of his gracious dealings with the apostate sons of men, and was introduced as soon as the time was fully come which he had appointed for it, and had foretold in ancient prophecies, and in which all things were ripe for it by a general expectation of the Messiah, and by a most deplorable and universal degeneracy and corruption in doctrine and manners among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which made it the most seasonable time of God's appearing for their help and recovery, and for magnifying the glory of his grace therein : At this fittest time, I say, he, in his adorable wisdom, condescension, and kindness, took the opportunity to bring in this concluding administration of the richest mercy, that he might set to rights all the disorder and enmity that sin had introduced, and (*ἐκταρα-ίσαντες*) by gathering together the scattered parts of intelligent creatures, might recapitulate, reduce, and place them in order again under Christ, as their head, including both the holy angels, as also the glorified saints in heaven \*, and believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* of all nations and degrees of sinners upon earth, by re-uniting them into one body for mutual affection and communion, and for joint-worship, (*Phil.* ii. 9, 10. *Heb.* xii. 22, 23. and *Rev.* v. 11,—14.) under Christ, who is a head of confirmation and government to angels; a head of righteousness, of representation and redemption, as well as of the most peculiar influence and government, to the church that is gathered from among men; and a head of reconciliation to both the *Jewish* and *Gentile* sorts of them between themselves, and between God, angels and them, (*chap.* ii. 14, 15, 16. and *Col.* i. 20.) that they might all be brought into a new state of peace and friendship with God and one another, and might be all set in their proper place, and all summ'd up and comprehended in Christ, as head over all things to the church. (*ver.* 21, 22, 23.)

† In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,

‡ In whom also, for the accomplishment of this great design †, we of the *Jewish* nation, who believe, have

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\* *All things* (*τα πάντα*) in the neuter gender is sometimes used for all persons, as appears from *Gal.* iii. 22. compared with *Rom.* xi. 32. in the first of which places, he has concluded all under sin, the neuter, (*τα πάντα*) and in the second has concluded them all in unbelief, in the masculine gender (*τας πάντας*) is used.

† That this is meant of the believing *Jews* is plain to me, not only because the apostle here includes himself with the persons he is speaking of, (see the note on *ver.* 4.) but in the next verse describes them as those who first trusted in Christ, before the gospel was preached to the *Gentiles*; and then by way

of distinction from them, he manifestly speaks of the *Gentiles*, *ver.* 13. who afterwards trusted in Christ also, when, upon the rejection of the unbelieving *Jews*, the gospel of salvation came to be preached to them; and that the *Jews*, and not the *Gentiles* at *Ephesus*, were the first that believed in Christ, appears from the account we have of their conversion, *Acts* xviii. 19, 24,—28, and xix. 1,—10; and that the *Gentile Ephesians* were not the first converts among that sort of people is plain, because other *Gentiles* believed before them, as appears from *Acts* xiii. 43,—45.

tance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;

have been admitted in our effectual calling to a part and portion in, and have a right and title to, and possession in Christ our head, of the glorious inheritance of eternal life †, which is disposed of by sovereign grace to us, as it were by lot, and belongs to the adoption of sons, to which we were predestinated, (*ver. 5.*) according to the free and unchangeable purpose of God, who works with almighty energy, (*ἐνδυνάμει*) not at random, nor from a necessity of nature to the utmost of what he could do, but according to the contrivance and direction of his infinite wisdom, and the free determination of his own good-will and pleasure, as to what he sees to be most fit and proper for him to do.

12 That we should be in the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

12 That we the natural seed of Abraham, to whom the gospel was first preached, and who first were brought to depend upon, and hope in Christ (*πρωταδικότες ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*) for all salvation, might be monuments of his grace, to its eternal glory, and might glorify him for his mercy in making, and his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, which he granted to our fathers, (*Micah vii. 20.*) and which he has performed to us, as a people who were first taken into covenant with him, and to whom he primarily sent his Son to bless us in turning us away from our iniquities, (*Acts iii. 26.*) and so the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first, &c. (*Rom. i. 16.*)

13 In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

13 In whom those of you that are of the Gentile sort have also trusted, according to the nature and design of his last gracious dispensation under the gospel-state\*, and have obtained a right and title to the eternal inheritance equally with the believing Jews, when ye in due time came to hear the preaching of that blessed doctrine, which is infallibly and emphatically true, and the most important of all truths, as it contains the substance of the spiritual blessings, of which the ceremonial law was only a shadow, and as the highest attestations to it from

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† The word (*κλήρο*) from which this (*κληρονομία*) is derived, and is here rendered we have obtained an inheritance, signifies a part or portion, *Acts viii. 32. an inheritance, Acts xxvi. 18. Col. i. 12. and a lot, Acts xiii. 19.* with a manifest reference to God's ordering that the inheritance of the land of Israel should be divided among their several tribes by lot, *Numb. xxi. 55.* the whole disposing of which was of the Lord, *Prov. xvi. 33.* All these senses may be included in what is here said of the heavenly inheritance. And as an inheritance peculiarly belongs to children, and the apostle here speaks of being predestinated to it, he seems to refer back to

what he had said *ver. 5.* about their being predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, which shews that it related, if not principally, yet at least equally, to Jewish, as well as Gentile believers.

\* This expression in the Greek is elliptical. Our translators have filled up what is wanting in it by re-asserting the word *trusted*, from the last clause of the preceding verse; but perhaps it might be as well supplied by adding, instead of that, *have obtained an inheritance*, which had been affirmed of the believing Jews at the beginning of *ver. 11.* and is here again affirmed of the believing Gentiles.

from heaven, as such ; even the glad tidings of salvation, as they are brought to you by the gospel, which publisheth it, and shows the way of attaining it, and assures every true believer of it ; and which has been made effectual to the saving of your own souls through faith in Christ Jesus. In whom also, by virtue of your union with him, after ye had believed in a saving manner, ye were still further sanctified, and more evidently impressed with the holy image of God, as wax is with the lineaments of the seal † : And as the sealing of deeds of inheritance, is used to ascertain its heirs of their title to it ; and as merchants, after they have bought their goods, set their own seal upon them to distinguish them from others ; so ye were assured of your personal interest in the eternal inheritance, or of your being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, by his Spirit of adoption, who is holy in his nature and operations, and has made you holy by his sanctifying and sealing you ; and is the great promise of the New Testament, (*Acts* i. 4. and ii. 33. and *Gal.* iii. 14.) and that particularly under the character of the Spirit of truth, and the Comforter, (*John* xiv. 16, 17.) and who in his sealing work brings home and applies the promises with light and power to our own souls, for the establishment of our faith and hope in Christ. (*2 Cor.* i. 21, 24.)

13 Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory ;

14 Which Spirit as given to us, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and as dwelling and working faith and love in us, (*ver.* 15.) and as sealing us, (*ver.* 13.) is a security, pledge, and earnest of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light, and gives the plainest evidence to us of our right and title to it ; and is indeed itself a part and fore-taste of it for our present satisfaction and joy, till we and all God's peculiar people, who were redeemed by the death of Christ, (*Titus* ii. 14.) and are his purchased inheritance ‡, shall be fully delivered from

#### N O T E S.

† This sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise is, I think, by no means to be confined to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, because it is such a sealing as was an earnest of the inheritance, which cannot be said merely of extraordinary gifts ; many having been endowed with them, who had not any security for heaven, or earnest to assure them of it, and give them a part of the inheritance itself, as appears from *Mat.* vii. 22, 23. And therefore it seems necessary to refer this sealing of the Spirit to some further work of grace in their hearts, beyond their first believing, whereby they were not only impressed with

the image of the seal, but were likewise assured of their own personal interest in Christ, and in the heavenly inheritance, with a reference to which this sealing of the Spirit is here mentioned : And this is evidently spoken of as a work distinct from that which passed in them at their first believing, and as what followed after it ; and therefore could not be of the essence of true faith.

‡ Purchased possession, may relate either to the church of God, which are a peculiar people, whom he has purchased with his own blood (*ἀνταποκτάμενος*) *1 Pet.* ii. 9. and *Acts* xx. 28. ; or to heaven itself, which is spoken of

from all sin and sorrow, and advanced to the possession of all possible glory, which was to be redeemed by our near kinsman, because we had forfeited it by sin, which accordingly he purchased for us, and to which he will raise us, when he shall *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us*, (Rom. viii. 11.) All this tends unto, and shall issue in the highest exaltation of the glorious name of God, the Father, Son, and Spirit: And that such wonderful grace should be extended to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, is for the greater illustration of his glory, that every subject of it might shew forth his praise, on account of the effectual application of the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to trust in Christ, and has sealed them to, and is the earnest of their inheritance, as well as on account of the *election* of the Father, who predestinated them to it, (*ver. 4, 5.*) and of the *redemption* of Christ, (*ver. 7.*) who purchased both it for them, and them for it, and in whom they have obtained it, (*ver. 11, 12.*)

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

15, 16 In reflection therefore on the grace of God, toward you of the *Gentile*, as well as *Jewish* sort, in his choosing, redeeming and effectually calling you, (*v. 4, &c.*) which is now still more abundantly manifested by its peculiar and abiding effects upon you, I who have your spiritual welfare entirely at heart, greatly rejoice in it †; and ever since I received an account of the continuance and eminence of your trust and hope in the Lord Jesus, as your only Head and Saviour, and of the affectionate love that your faith in him has produced to all, without distinction, that bear his image and are his children begotten of him, whether they be weaker or stronger believers, attended with greater or lesser infirmities, or of whatever denomination or party: Ever since, I say, I heard these comfortable tidings of the faith and love that are among you, and that abide with you, *καὶ ὑμεῖς*) and was thereby further assured of your having a real interest in all the fore-mentioned benefits; my soul is filled with so much joy on your behalf,

#### N O T E.

of as the "purchased salvation of the soul," (*ἡ ἀποβρασμένη σωτηρία*) Heb. x. 39.; it having been so, when Christ obtained eternal redemption by his blood for us. Heb. ix. 12.

† What the apostle says about his hearing of their faith and love, is no proof, as some would have it, that he had not been the instrument of their conversion, or that he had never seen them; for though he speaks of the Thessalonians, as having received the gospel by his ministry, 1st epistle i. 5, 6, 9.; yet he says to them, chap. iii. 6,—10, "when

Timotheus came from you to us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity—Therefore, beloved, we were comforted over you," &c. And writing to Philemon, whom he speaks of as owing even his own self to him, probably because he was his spiritual father, *ver. 19* he says, *ver. 4, 5.* "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and towards all his saints:" and so his bearing of the faith and



half, that \* whenever I make my solemn addresses to God, especially in my secret retirements every morning and evening, as well as on other occasions, public or private, I bear you continually upon my heart, which is enlarged for you, in a way of blessing and praising God for his grace bestowed on you, and in a way of fervent supplication and prayer, as particularly remembering and mentioning you in my humble pleas with him.

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

17 That he, who is the covenant-God of our Lord Jesus Christ, as he appointed and called him to, and qualified him for, and according to his promises accepted and rewarded him in his mediatorial work, as the head and Saviour of the church †; who also may be stiled *the Father of glory*, as he is infinitely glorious in himself, and in the whole scheme of salvation; and is the fountain, author and giver of all the glory, that Christ himself is possessed of in his human nature, and office-capacity, and of all the blessedness and glory, that not only the angels, but the saints in heaven do, or ever shall enjoy in, through and together with him; and who is to be eternally admired and glorified for all this: My earnest supplication to God under these exalted and encouraging conceptions of him is, that he would please to increase the free communications of his enlightning and sealing Spirit ‡, to lead you into further exercises of faith, love, and other graces, and into a still more clear and experimental acquaintance and commu-

#### N O T E S.

and love of these Ephesians, as well as of the Thessalonians and Philemon, most naturally relate to the accounts which he had received of their steadfastness, perseverance, and increase in faith and love, since he left them, and during the space of so many years as he had been absent from them: this epistle having been wrote, according to the lowest computation, about five years after the last time of his being at Ephesus; and his joy and praise on their account might be the greater because he then told them, by a prophetic spirit, of the danger they would be exposed to from corrupt teachers, which would spring up from among them. Acts xx. 29, 30.

\* 'Tis not to be supposed that the apostle was always actually giving thanks, or praying for them: but his *not ceasing* to do it intimates the constancy of his remembrance of them in solemn prayer, and he seems principally to refer to his daily set times for that duty every morning and evening, according to the general custom of the Jews at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, and as that was called the *constant burnt-offering*, Ex. xxix. 41. So they were said to *serve God incessantly day and night*, Acts xxvi. 7. and the disciples were said to be *continually in the tem-*

ple, praising and blessing God, Luke xxiv. 53.

† God the Father is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, as man and mediator, (see the note on ver. 3.) and his being stiled the *Father of glory*, may be considered either as a personal character, to distinguish him not only from the Son, who is called the *King of glory*, and the *Lord of glory*, Psal. xxiv. 10. and 1 Cor. ii. 8. but also from the Holy Ghost, who is called the *Spirit of glory*, 1 Pet. iv. 14.: and so either of them personally, and altogether essentially, may be called the *God of glory*, Psal. xxix. 3. Or it may be considered as an oeconomical character to intimate, that all communicative glory is first derived from the Father.

‡ The spirit of revelation is not to be understood of the extraordinary immediate revelations that were peculiar to inspired men: For this spirit of revelation is what the apostle prays might be given to every member of the church, and so relates to what may be hoped for in common by all true believers, as such, and is a revelation peculiar to them in the ordinary way of special gracious illumination to their spiritual advantage, which our blessed Lord spoke of Mat. xi. 25, 26, 27. and xvi. 17.

communion with him, as those that are made wise to salvation; and that he would yet more abundantly shed abroad his love in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, (*Rom. v. 5.*) to give you the brightest, sweetest, and most assuring manifestations of his love to your own souls, in your further knowledge of himself in Christ †, as your own covenant-God and Father, and in your growing and approving acknowledgment of him (*το επιγνωσις κυριου*) as such.

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

18 I humbly beseech † him to give you the illumination of his Spirit in your hearts, for irradiating the eyes of your minds to such an eminent degree, as that ye may know by daily experience, and with the utmost certainty and delight, what a sincere and genuine hope yours is \*, what excellent objects it is pitched upon, and what solid never-failing grounds ye have for that hope to which God has called you externally by the gospel, and internally by his special and effectual grace, and that by spiritual meditations, prelibations, and realizing views of faith, ye may know with lively sentiments, just propriety and great compass of thought; and may know for yourselves, what is the true nature and transcendent excellency of those invaluable and immense treasures of blessedness which God, the Father of glory hath provided, as an inheritance, *according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*, (*Phil. iv. 19.*) for holy souls: an inheritance which he has in the riches of his grace given to them, as his children for an everlasting possession; which will make them exceeding rich and glorious, and consists in the enjoyment of himself, who is their *portion and glory*, (*Pf. xvi. 5. and Ps. lx. 19.*) and which he counts it his glory to bestow upon them, and will be eminently glorified by in them, (*2 Thef. i. 10.*) whom he has taken for his own inheritance, (*Deut. xxxiii. 9.*) and on whom he as it were lays out all his riches to complete their felicity and glory.

19, 20

## N O T E S.

† Him, by the construction, relates to the Father of glory to whom the address was made, rather than to Christ, who is mentioned only incidentally in the foregoing part of the verse. However, to include both, I have considered it as the knowledge of God in Christ.

† The former part of these words (*νευρωσιν το οφθαλμον του διανοου υμων*) being the accusative case after the verb give (*δωκεν*) ver. 17. is apparently governed by *that*; and so, with supplying that verb, might be more grammatically rendered that he would give *enlightened eyes of your mind, or eyes of your under-*

*standing enlightened*, which makes it a continuation of the prayer for still farther enlightening, even unto their knowing (*ως το επιγνωσις*) what is the hope of his calling.

\* Hope is sometimes put for that grace itself, *Rom. v. 4, 5, and xv. 13.* at other times, for the object of it, *Col. i. 5. and Tit. ii. 13.* and at others, for the grounds of hope, *Ezra x. 2. Jer. xviii. 12. Lam. iii. 29. and Rom. iv. 18.* first clause: and perhaps, all these senses may be fitly enough taken in here, though the two last seem to be principally intended.

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power;

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

19, 20 My heart's desire and prayer to God for all these comfortable, edifying, and confirming manifestations of his Spirit is, that ye may not only have the most desirable insight into the exceeding riches of his grace toward you; but may likewise understand and consider, for your further encouragement and joy, what is the super-abundant, transcendent, all-conquering greatness of his power, which he has already exerted itself our favour whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles* \*, by its working faith in us, as he then infused a vital principle into our dead souls, and effectually subdued all the power which Satan and this world had over us, together with the corrupt inclinations and desires of the flesh and of the mind, and the prejudices and enmity of our hearts, all which united their utmost efforts against God, and against his work upon us, (*chap. ii. 1, 2, 3.*) And I pray that ye may know the greatness of his power, which is continually employed for our safe-defence, support and preservation through all dangers and difficulties here, (*1 Pet. i. 5.*) and will be gloriously displayed in raising us up, body as well as soul, to a state of complete blessedness hereafter; as effected according to the same energy of the power of his might, which he effectually exerted in Christ himself, the Head of the church, when by his almighty power, as well as in a way of justice, he loosed the bands and raised him up in his public capacity, as a triumphant conqueror over death and all the powers of darkness, (*Acts. ii. 24.*); and when in consequence of his resurrection, God, by the same omnipotent arm, exalted him in his human nature, to a state of all possible blessedness, majesty, and glory, and to a quiet everlasting possession of all royal dignities and delights in the highest heaven, and in things that pertain to his heavenly kingdom, as the

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## N O T E.

\* The apostle here brings in *himself*, and his Jewish brethren, to shew that his love was not confined in this excellent prayer to *Gentile* believers; and very probably, when he came to speak of the exceeding greatness of God's power toward them, he reflected on that which was so remarkably exerted in his own conversion, *Acts ix. 3—9*; and so to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, &c. relates to the mighty power that was put forth for the working of faith itself in their hearts at their first conversion, as well as in its subsequent acts toward them till they should be brought safe to glory: And that it, at least, includes, a reference to the first work of heart-changing grace, may be gather'd from the apostle's speaking

of it in the next words, as a power of the like kind with that which wrought in Christ when God raised him from the dead; and in correspondence thereunto 'tis called in some following verses, *chap. ii. 1, 5*, God's quickning them that were dead in trespasses and sins, and quickning them together with Christ, and is afterwards called, *ver. 10*, his creating them in Christ unto good works, which carries the highest idea of divine power that is known in all the works of nature; and in that parallel epistle, *Col. ii. 11, 12*, it is called their being risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead; and their being quicken'd together with him, as those that were dead in their sins, and in the circumcision of their flesh.

reward of his sufferings, after he had by himself purged out sins, (*Heb. i. 3.*) which may be called in metaphorical terms, God the Father setting him at his own right hand in token of the highest approbation and honour.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come :

21 He has herein advanced him far above all creatures whatsoever in place and dignity, and with such supremacy and rule over even the greatest, as well as the least of them, as surpasses all thought and expression ; he has invested him with uncontrollable authority and dominion over all demons and their chief in hell ; and over all ranks and orders of angels in heaven, (*Col. ii. 15.* See *Heb. i. 6, 14.*) \* and over all the princes and potentates, nobles, powers, and magistrates on earth, and over every person, dignity, or authority of what character soever, that is or can be ever known or mentioned, not only in this present world, but likewise in that which is future to us even in the heavenly world, where he reigns in all his glory, *angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him*, (*1 Pet. iii. 22.*) *at whose name every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*, in token of their homage and subjection to him, (*Phil. ii. 10.*)

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

22 And as the most absolute victory and power over enemies is signified by their being put under the conqueror's feet, (*Josh. x. 23, 24.*) so God the Father, in that universal lordship which he has given to Christ over all creatures, has placed all his enemies in a state of subjection to him, that he may have them entirely under his own power, and may reign as a rightful conqueror over them †, in such a way as he sees fit till all their opposition to him, his people and cause, shall be entirely defeated,

#### N O T E S.

\* *Principalties and powers* are apply'd to good angels, chap. iii. 10 ; to evil angels, chap. vi. 12. and to men, *1 Luke xii. 11.* where the same words (*αρχαι και εξουσιαι*) are used, as here, and so they are translated with reference to men, (*Titus iii. 1.*) and as the apostle here speaks of those that are *not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*, he by just construction includes them all, and intimates that there are different ranks, orders, and degrees of government and subordination among the holy angels, and evil spirits, in the future invisible state, as well as among men in the present visible world ; and that Christ is far exalted above them all, even the highest of them, under what names or titles soever they may be distinguished. See Dr Goodwin on the place, Vol. I. Sermon 32.

† Tho' the saints, as well as all other creatures, are certainly under Christ's Lordship and dominion, and so that sense are included in the *All Things* that are put under his feet, according to the widest sense of that expression, as we have it *1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, 27.* and *Heb. ii. 8* ; yet as in the *Corinthians* 'tis mention'd with a special reference to *subduing and destroying all his enemies*, so in the application of this passage here, it seems to be still more confin'd to that view ; because Christ's universal empire over all things had been strongly expressed in the verse before, and then, in the next verse after, the church is spoken of as *his body* in distinction from *all things that are put under his feet*, and he is said to be head over all things *to the church*, or for their good.

defeated, and they be all actually subdued under him, trampled on as his footstool, and finally destroyed by him, (*Psal. cx. 1. and 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.*) And as the chief glory and delight of the mediator lyes in his *having power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him*, (*John xvii. 2.*) so God in his infinite love to him and them, and in the righteous and honourable recompence of his sufferings and death for them, has given him absolute and universal dominion in the kingdom of providence, as well as of grace, over all persons and things, with this ultimate view and design †, that he may manage, over-rule, restrain, order, and issue all events for the spiritual and eternal benefit of the catholic invincible church, inclusive of every true believer; and for the preservation of the visible church, that it may never be rooted out of the world: Yea, over and above all the fore-mentioned donations, God has added this, as the highest and most eminent gift of his love to him and to his church, that he, who is Lord of all, should be in the dearest, most intimate and peculiar relation, not only a head of guidance and government, but also of life and influence, and of tender care and protection to the whole, and every true member of it, which stand in as near and vital union with him, and have as effectual communication for activity, growth and strength from him, as the natural body has from its head.

23 Which is his body, the fellowship of him that seeketh all in all.

23 And which, taken all-together, are his mystical body, and under that notion of them are his *relative* fulness, so that if anyone, even the least member of them, were wanting, he, as their head, would be incomplete, tho' in himself he is infinitely perfect, and has no need of them, but is the fund of all their supplies, as *out of his fulness they all receive grace for grace*, (*John i. 16.*) He fills all his members with his spirit, and with the gifts and graces of every kind, which any of them have, or are found among them all, that by means of his word, officers and ordinances, which he also fills with a divine energy, *they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness*, (*Phil. i. 11.*) and grow up in all things into

#### N O T E.

† This apparently relates, not to the original constitution of Christ's headship in the days of eternity, but to his *actual investiture* with full power for completely executing its great design, as all the preceding instances of his exaltation do, in consequence of his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven: And God's *giving him to be head* (*cap. v. 23*) over all things, or as some ren-

der it above all, may relate either to his *Lordship* over all things in general for the good of the church; or to his *peculiar headship* to the church itself, as the chief view and final upshot of God's intent on in the foregoing steps of Christ's advancement, which are mentioned in a beautiful gradation, till they reach unto, and issue in this highest and most eminent instance of it.

*into him who is the head, till they come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, (Ephes. iv. 10, 13, 15.)*

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How free and sovereign is the grace of God ! He from all eternity has chosen some, rather than others, to be sons and heirs of glory, not from any foreseen goodness in them, but merely from the good pleasure of his will, who chose them that they might be holy from a principle of love to him, as the means of their being happy for ever. And, O how great is the happiness of all such ! They are blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings, and accepted in the Beloved, in whom they have the forgiveness of sins, and obtain the inheritance of eternal life, according to the riches, and to the praise of the glory of his grace. This is discovered to them in the gospel, by means of which God abounds toward them in all wisdom and prudence ; and by this word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, we are brought to know the mysteries of God's will about all these great and important things. O wondrous grace, that this gospel should be brought, and made effectual to Gentile sinners ! O happy souls, that are enabled to trust in Christ for themselves, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise to the day of redemption ! How should all this engage the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus to glorify God for the riches of his grace toward them ! And as the Father, Son, and Spirit, bear their peculiar parts in their salvation, how should they abound in paying the honours that belong to them respectively, for electing, redeeming, and sealing love, and wait, with faith and hope, in a course of holy obedience, for the perfecting of their final redemption ! With what gratitude and joy should we bless God for the faith and love which he has wrought in our souls ; for the hope, to which he has called us ; and for the exceeding greatness of his almighty power, like that whereby Christ himself was raised from the dead, which has been, is, and shall still further be exerted, to the salvation of every one that believes ! How earnest should we be in our prayers, that God would give us yet more and more of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation of the knowledge of himself, and would still farther enlighten the eyes of our understandings, that we may experimentally know what great and glorious things he has done and provided for us ! And with what honour should we think of Christ ! In Him believers were chosen, and have redemption through his blood, and are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise : In Him all things in heaven and earth are gathered into one, that angels and saints, whether Jews or Gentiles, might be brought into a state of mutual friendship, harmony, and peace. He is now ascended in our nature, in which he rose from the dead, to the highest heaven, and is enthroned in glory at the Father's right hand, infinitely above all orders of angels, and every created power and dignity that can be imagined in heaven and earth ; and has an universal empire and dominion in the kingdom of providence and grace, that all things might be managed, in a subserviency to his own and his Father's glory, for the confusion and destruction of all his enemies, and for the preservation and everlasting welfare of his church : He is their Head, and they are his mystical body, every member of which is so near and dear to him, that he would count it an abatement of his own relative fulness, were he to lose any one of them : But what a glorious Head of constant communication is our blessed Lord, that they may be filled, in his time and way, with all the fulness of God !

### C H A P. II.

*The apostle still farther to magnify the riches of God's free grace toward the Ephesians, represents their deplorable state by nature whether they were Gentiles or Jews, 1,—3. Shows what a happy change divine grace had made upon it, 4,—10. And to enhance his*  
grace

grace, especially toward the Gentile part among them, he calls upon them to reflect upon their former state of heathenism, and the exceeding great privileges and blessings which they were brought into by the gospel, equally with the believing Jews, as one body with them, 11,—22.

## TEXT.

AND you both  
be quickened  
who were dead in  
trespasses and  
lives.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS God, by the exceeding greatness of his power, (*chap. i. 20.*) raised the crucified body of Christ from the dead, and *that* as a public person; so by an operation of the same almighty power toward them who believe, (*chap. i. 19 \**) he has also raised you up to a life of justification from the guilt of sin and condemnation of the law, as having forgiven you all trespasses; and has quickened you to a life of holiness in the renovation of your nature, as having delivered you from the power of sin, whereby ye were *alienated from the life of God*, (*chap. iv. 18.*) that he might fit you for living to him here, and for an eternal life in the enjoyment of him hereafter: He has thus quickened even those of you, who were sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as other believers, and who, during your unconverted state, were dead men, not indeed by a physical or natural death of the soul, which is immortal, or of the animal, or civil life, which still subsists though mortal; but in a legal and moral or spiritual sense, with respect to the favour and image of God, as persons that were dead in law, for your transgressions †, and had received innumerable

## NOTES.

\* This verse is improperly cut off from the first chapter, and made the beginning of the second; for neither *he has quickened*, nor any other nominative case and verb, are in the *Greek*. The sense therefore is to be supplied by something that went before, as it is afterwards expressed, ver. 5.; and the seven first verses of this chapter, and so on to ver. 10. are a continuation of the argument which the apostle had begun at the 19th and 20th verses of the preceding chapter. There he had spoke of God's working in the *Ephesians* by "an exceeding greatness of power," according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when "he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places;" upon the mentioning of which, he, in the fulcres and fervour of his heart, runs into a flow of thoughts about the height and glory of Christ's exaltation in the three following verses; then in the beginning of this chapter he re-assumes the thread of his discourse, and gives us the reddition or counter-part of what was done in believers, correspondent to what had been done in

Christ their Head, as they in conformity to him, and together with him, are quickened from the death of sin, and "raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ." And though, in the first and second verses, the apostle speaks most immediately of the *Gentile* part among the *Ephesians*; yet to shew that what he here says about their being dead in sin was not peculiar to them, but common to all persons, *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, in their unregenerate state, he in the third and fifth verses speaks of the *Jews*, including himself, as having been "by nature the children of wrath, even as others;" (see the second note on *chap. i. 3.*) and as *dead in sin* before. (See the note on *Luke ix. 60.*)

† Both such kinds of death and life may be here included, since the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, are spoken of as *children of wrath*, which relates to a legal death; and as raised from that sort of death in which they *walked in sin*, and in the lusts of their flesh, &c. which relates to a spiritual or moral death, ver. 2, 3.; and since, as has been observed, (see the paraphrase on *chap. i. 20.*) Christ's rising

merable mortal wounds by sin to the extinguishing of the life of God in you, and so, like persons stabbed through and through to death, were killed as it were over and over again, not by one sin only, but by many, original and actual sins, and by a multitude of all sorts of offences and errors (τοῖς παραπτώμασι καὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτίαις) in heart and life, which rendered you extremely miserable and odious, and utterly incapable, like persons corporally dead, of reviving again by any power of your own: or of living, breathing, moving, and acting in a spiritual manner toward God: or of having any comfortable communion with him, while ye, though dead in sin God-ward, were not only alive, but lively and active in all manner of transgressions against him and his law.

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

2 In which sins (ἡμῶν) as being strongly addicted to them, and taking pleasure in them, ye formerly, in the days of your heathenism and unregeneracy, constantly, freely, and progressively, moved and acted, under one form or another of them, like persons that walked about in them, (παραπορεύεσθαι) and willingly ran with the stream; according to the present corrupt age \*, fashion, and custom of this evil world, which *lies in wickedness*, (1 John v. 19.) according to the will and desire, instigation and rule of the devil as your prince, who is also the chief of the infernal powers, that are united as a body of mighty force into one kingdom under him, the seat of whose dominion is in the air, where on some occasions he raises storms and tempests, (Job i. 19.) and makes visionary aerial representations, (see the paraphrase on Luke iv. 5.); and where he and his diabolical emissaries are continually roving about this lower world, (1 Pet. v. 8.) Ye walked, I say, according to the dictates of this prince of darkness, who is also stiled *the god of this world*, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) †, and is the chief ruler

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rising in a public character, which this answers to, may be understood, not only of his body's being quickened and raised from the grave, but likewise of his *discharge*, as the surety of his people, from the guilt and punishment of their sins.

\* The word rendered *this course* (τοῦ αἵματος) sometimes signifies the *age*, and denotes the corrupt state and condition of men in this world, as in 2 Cor. iv. 4. And Gal. i. 4.

† As these words lie in the Greek, the exact construction is, "the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit which now works (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργήσαντος) in the children of disobedience;" and so the devil is spoken of, not only as the "prince

of the power of the air," but likewise as "the prince of the spirit that works in the children of disobedience." Children of disobedience is an Hebraism for *disobedient persons*, as here and in chap. v. 6. and, perhaps, may mean those that are most notoriously so, as *the sons of Belial* usually does. And the "spirit which works in the children of disobedience," may mean either those *demons or evil spirits*, that act under him as their chief, (see the note on chap. i. 21.) and are spoken of in the singular number, because they are *one* in their design and influence, tho' in themselves *many*, as that *legion of evil spirits* which possessed the *Centurion*, is sometimes spoken of in the singular,



ruler of those foul spirits, by which, as by joint-concurrence, he works in the hearts of them that obey not the gospel, and is the exciter and manager of that malignant spirit which evidently works in these sons of contumacy and unbelief, (*ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας*) who at this very day addict themselves to all iniquity.

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

3 Among which children of disobedience (*ἐν οἷς*) all of us, as persons of the same depraved spirit and temper, way, and walk, in the days of our unregeneracy\*, even we *Jews*, as well as the *Gentiles*, continually moved, lived and acted, as I myself particularly did, while I was a proud Pharisee, persecutor, and blasphemer; and we were led away with divers lusts and pleasures, (2 Tim. iii. 6.) sometimes seeking to satisfy one, and at other times another of them, *such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, (1 John ii. 16.): Under the power of those evil propensions and workings of corrupt nature, which may be called *our flesh*, as it is conveyed to us by fleshly generations, and is inherent in us, we then walked according to the dictates and inclinations of the body of sin, gratifying, acting over, and indulging the irregular desires and appetites of the animal body in all its members, which are brutal†, and of the soul in all its powers and faculties, and particularly in its wishes and contrivances, which are diabolical; we therein freely consented and yielded to them, and chose them: And in opposition to what the carnal *Jews* boast of their privileges by birth as the seed of *Abraham*, (Mat. iii. 9. and John viii. 33, 39.) and in distinction from the actual sins that any, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, have been guilty of by initiation

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her, and sometimes in the plural number, Mark v. 7,—33. and Luke viii. 28,—33.; or we may understand it of that wicked spirit or temper in sinners which the devil is the author of. (See Zaach and Dr. Goodwin on the places and Mr. Joseph Mede's *Diatribae*, Vol. I. pag. 30, &c. of his works.)

\* As in the epistle to the *Romans* the apostle proved first that the *Gentiles*, and then that the *Jews* were all under sin, inasmuch that they were no better than those, Rom. iii. 9.; and did this to shew the necessity of justification and salvation merely by grace for one, as well as the other; so here, that he might magnify the exceeding riches of the grace of God to both these sorts of people, he having shewn in the two first verses that the *Gentiles* were in the most deplorable circumstances of sin and misery, goes on in this verse to shew the like concerning the *Jews*,

including himself, before they were effectually called; and exactly parallel to this, he with the like view speaks of himself and *Titus*, who were *Jews*, (Tit. iii. 4, 5.); and the apostle *Peter*, writing to the scattered *Jews*, and putting himself in, speaks in like manner, 1 Peter iv. 3.

† *Flesh* in the foregoing clause relates to the whole man, and so signifies the corruption of human nature, as in many other places of scripture, (see the note on Rom. vii. 5.) and is opposed to the spiritual and holy principle, which is called a *divine nature* in them that have escaped the corruptions which are in the world through lust, (2 Peter i. 4.) But here *flesh* manifestly signifies the body, and is opposed to the soul of man, to shew that the lusts of corrupt nature spread through body and soul, and are acted by both. See the paraphrase on 2 Cor. vii. 1.

tation and custom \*, we, all of us universally by reason of original corruption, which contains the seeds of all iniquity, and is interwoven with our nature, as derived, according to the law of ordinary generation, from an older father than *Abraham*, even from fallen *Adam*, our common head and representative, in whom we all have sinned, (*Rom. v. 12.*) we all, I say, by our natural birth, and as long as we continued in a state of nature, deserved, lay exposed unto, and were under a law-sentence of the wrath of God, which then abode upon us. (*John iii. 36.*) This was the case of every one of us, *Jews*, as well as, and equally with the *Gentiles*; of the elect and called of God among both, as well as of others, there being no difference by nature between us and the rest of mankind.

\* But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved us,

4 But, O matchless, surprising, and affecting grace! the infinitely holy and blessed God, instead of taking vengeance upon us for all this, as was reasonably to be expected, has gone into a quite contrary course, because he, who is the Father of mercies, and delights in mercy, (*2 Cor. i. 3.* and *Micah vii. 18.*) whose riches of mercy are most excellent and abundant, inexhaustible and overflowing, to pity, help, and save sinful and miserable creatures, and to enrich them with the multitude of his mercies; this God, without any thing in us to induce him to it, has from all eternity set his love in a peculiar manner upon us, whom he has chosen and called, designing therein to bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (*Chap. i. 3, 4.*)

5 Even when we

5 In this wonderful love, with which he of his own sovereign

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\* If we consult the scripture-use of the term *by nature* (*φύσει*) we shall find, that when it is applied to God, it relates to what he is (*power*) by his own nature and perfections; in opposition to all false gods, *Gal. iv. 8.* and when applied to men, it relates either to what remains: there are of the light of nature (*φύσει*) in mankind, that directs and excites them to do the things contained in the law, as in *Rom. ii. 14.* or to what they are in their natural state, or by birth, as when the *Gentiles*, in opposition to the covenant-privileges of the *Jews*, are spoken of as the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, (*καὶ ἄγρια φύσις*) and as the uncircumcision which is by nature (*ἡ φύσις*) is opposed to the *Jews* by nature (*φύσει*.) These, I think, are all the places, besides this before us, (*ἐν ἀναστροφῇ ὧν*) where the term *by nature* occurs, either in the Old or New Testament; and there is no appearance in any of them, that it ever signifies by custom, or by practice, or customary practice, as some would

have it here, which would indeed make the apostle guilty of a needless tautology: for their customary sinning had been fully expressed in the former part of the verse; but all these passages agree in expressing what belongs to the nature of the persons to whom it is applied: And when we are said to be by nature the children of wrath, the word (*παῖδες*) children in its primary sense, has a peculiar reference to birth; and, tho' it is sometimes used in a laxer signification, it has a respect to being some way or other born; and as the apostle varies the word, and instead of that which he had used ver. 2. where he spoke of children (*υἱοὶ*) of disobedience, substitutes another that relates to persons being born, and says, as it lies in the Greek were children by nature of wrath, he seems to have done it with a design to strengthen the force of the term by nature, as signifying, according to the Hebrew idiom, what we are in our fallen state of nature by birth.

we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,)

sovereign will and good pleasure has loved us, even when we *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*, one as much as another, were in such forlorn, wretched, and desperate circumstances, as to be dead in sin, and so helpless, hopeless, and loathsome in our fallen state; He even then infused into us a principle of spiritual life, and recovered us to a state of favour with himself, in which his life, by virtue of our union with Christ, and in conformity to him, and together with him. (See the note on chap. i. 19, 20.) O astonishing instance of the free love of God †! and *that* particularly to those of the *Gentile*-sort among you, that he should quicken you, and thereby deliver you, as well as us of the *Jews*, from all the sin and misery into which ye were so deeply plunged, and should bring you into a state of favour with himself, and give you a title to, the beginnings and earnest, fore-tastes and securities of the whole of that *salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*, (2 Tim. ii. 10.)

6 And hath raised us up together, and make us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

6 And as God the Father raised up Christ to glory, and set him at his own right-hand in heavenly places, so he has already raised us up, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* together, without distinction *in him*, as our head and representative \*; and has already made us to sit together in the heavenly mansions *in him*, who has taken possession of them, as a forerunner and public person for us; and so we are complete, though not in ourselves, yet representatively, as comprehended in him, who is our covenant-head; and we are hereby assured, that in due time we shall certainly sit in heavenly places in our own persons together with Christ Jesus, with one another, and with all the saints.

7 That in the ages

7 All which God has done to this very end and purpose,

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† As the apostle was himself much affected with the mercy of God to the *Gentiles*, and was gradually introducing his design of particularly enlarging upon that subject which he most directly and professedly enters upon, ver. 11, and continues to the end of chap. iii. that he might the more affect their hearts with it; so in the run of his thoughts on the riches of God's grace in the whole of salvation to all that are made partakers of it, he often intermingles applications of it in a special manner to the *Gentiles*, as he seems to do here; but to shew that the salvation of the *Jews* was also as entirely of grace, he includes them, as like objects of it, ver. 7. where he expresses it by the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, *through Jesus Christ*, with reference to all that had

been said before about it, as equally extended to both sorts of believers.

\* It is the observation of several judicious divines, that the apostle in the preceding verse speaks of our being quickened *together with Christ*, but here of our being raised up together, and sitting in heavenly places together *in Christ*, (in *Agree*) which distinguishes our being raised up, &c. *in Christ*, from our being quickened *with him*, and shews that *gracious* relates to what is already done in, or upon us, and that "raising us up, and "our sitting in heavenly places" relates not to what is done *personally* in or upon us, but to what is done *in the person of Christ*, as our head and representative, &c. &c. and cannot well be understood with tolerable propriety in any other sense.

ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, thro' Christ Jesus.

pose, that in all succeeding ages of this world he might set forth an illustrious pattern, pledge, and earnest of the transcendent excellence and super-abounding fulness of his free favour, which he will manifest under the gospel-dispensation, both to *Gentiles* and *Jews*, as it has been exemplified in acts of special goodness, and endearing kindness towards us of both sorts, through the person, merit, and mediation of Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, for the encouragement of all sorts of sinners, *which shall hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*, (1 Tim. i. 16.): And his further design herein was, that he might for ever demonstrate and display the super-eminent glory of his grace in all its fulness, and with the brightest evidence in the world to come; when all its riches in every imaginable instance of his peculiar and distinguishing friendship towards us, thro' Jesus Christ, will shine with the highest lustre, and be laid out with the greatest profusion upon us, together with all his children, to make up the glory and blessedness of the heavenly state, which is coming on, to the admiration, joy, and praise of saints and angels, through the endless ages of eternity.

6 For by grace are ye saved, thro' faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;

8 For, as I hinted above, (*ver. 5.*) the whole of your salvation, who were *Gentiles*, as well as ours who were *Jews*, is from first to last, entirely a free and undeserved gift; it is all owing merely to the good-will and favour of God, that any of you are interested in the several forementioned blessings of a spiritual and eternal salvation, which are conveyed to you through faith, not by any virtue in itself, but as the means of God's own appointment, whereby ye received Christ, and rested alone on him for all salvation, that the honour of it may be reserved entirely to his grace, (*Rom. iv. 16.*) And this faith itself, as well as every other benefit which is brought home and applied by it, is not the product of any natural principle in yourselves, nor of your own good dispositions, or of the power of your own free-will, or of any improvement that ye were capable of making of the gospel itself; but it is all the free gift of God, who, of his own sovereign will and pleasure, graciously wrought it in you by the power of his Spirit; ye having *believed through grace*, (*Acts xviii. 27.*) and it being *given to you in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him*, (*Phil. i. 29.*)

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast;

9 Neither the salvation itself, nor the faith whereby ye are made partakers of it, is owing to any good works done by you, as the meritorious or moving cause of it: As there was certainly nothing of that kind to be

be found among the *Gentile*-part of you, to induce the great and holy God to shew such high favour to you, who in violation of the light and law of nature practised all abominable iniquities, (*Rom. i. 18,—32*) so there was nothing to engage God's love and kindness among the *Jewish* part of you, who, in contradiction to the clearer light, and higher obligations of supernatural revelation, had shamefully perverted and transgressed the law of *Moses* in numberless instances, (see *Rom. chap. ii. and iii.*) But God has manifested his grace in your respective recovery from these guilty and deplorable circumstances, that all pretences might be equally cut off from one and the other of you, as if it were owing to any works of righteousness performed by you, (*2 Tim. i. 9. and Tit. iii. 5.*) lest any one among you should be so vain-glorious, as to take a share of that honour to himself which belongs to God alone, (*1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31.*) or should vaunt and glory in himself, as if he had done something to render him worthy of mercy, (*Rom. iii. 27. and iv. 2.*) which indeed in this wretched state of things was absolutely impossible.

96 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus into good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.

10 For all of us, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, were so far from having done any works spiritually good, previous to our conversion, that every thing of that kind is *the effect and consequence*, and not *the cause* of the grace of God towards us, who as believers and saints, to allude to the fine composition of a *poem*, (*ᾠνμα*) are a curious piece of God's forming by a special operation of his infinite wisdom, as well as almighty power, answerable to that by which he at first brought forth the beautiful and harmonious fabric of this world out of a confused chaos: We were thereby created anew in Christ Jesus, and by virtue derived from him, as the head of our recovery, unto the bringing forth of all the good works that are now found with us, which we were utterly incapable of before; but which God, in his eternal scheme of salvation chose us to, (*chap. i. 4.*) and which in the counsels of his will, and by a work of preventing grace, he prepared us for, (*προπορευαστι*) that we, as new creatures, might live in the practice of them, and persevere therein to the end.

97 Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands:

11 Now therefore, to apply this in a particular manner to the *Gentile*-converts among you, that ye may be kept humble, and deeply affected with all the amazing grace which has been extended to you, I beseech you to call to mind, and seriously reflect upon your former deplorable state and condition, namely, that before Christ and the gospel were made known to you,

ye were idolatrous heathens, wallowing in all the defilements of apostate nature, and destitute even of the ordinance of circumcision, which by God's appointment was an external sign and token of a covenant-interest in him, and of the renovation of the heart, (*Gen. xvii. 10.* and *Deut. xxx. 6.*) and was to the believing *Israelites*, a seal of the righteausness of faith, (*Rom. iv. 11.*) and ye not only were, but still are, spoken of in a way of contempt and reproach by the carnal *Jews*\*, as an uncircumcised people, that have nothing to do with God's gracious covenant, or any of its privileges or means of salvation: Ye are thus spoken of by those that pride themselves in being deemed the circumcised people of God, as having that distinguishing mark upon their bodies, which was made by the hands of men, but which to the unbelieving *Jews* is only circumcision in the flesh, in distinction from that which is wrought in the heart, without human hands, by the Holy Spirit. (*Col. ii. 11.*)

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,

12 I intreat you to remember, that all a long, during your state of *Gentilism* and unregeneracy, ye really were separate from Christ, (*χωρὶς Χριστοῦ*) as having no knowledge of, or faith in, the only Saviour, or any vital union or communion with him, or any claim to the blessings of the gospel, that are purchased, revealed, and brought in by him: Ye also then were foreigners to all the peculiar external privileges, sacred as well as civil, that belonged to the visible church of the *Jews*, (*Rom. ix. 4.*) and to all the internal special blessings that pertained to the true *Israelites* among them; ye having at that time no relation to them, or union and fellowship, or right of citizenship with them, as a religious, any more than a political body; and so were far from God, and from all spiritual life and happiness: And ye were excluded, like strangers, from the pale of the covenant of grace †, which, in opposition to the covenant

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\* *Uncircumcision* and *circumcision* are here put for the *uncircumcised* and the *circumcised*, as they manifestly are in *Rom. ii. 26.* (See the note there.)

† *Christ* was the great promise of the Old Testament, as he was characterized by the seed of the woman, and the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David; and as all the other promises of the covenant of grace were summ'd up and centered in this, they are spoken of here, and *Acts ii. 30.* and *iii. 17.* and *xiii. 32.* and *xxvi. 6.* 7. and *Rom. iv. 14.* 15. and *Gal. iii. 17.* 19, 20, 21. in the singular number, as if they

were but one promise: But as this promise was issued out under various editions and enlargements at several periods, viz. to *Abraham*, and to him and his seed, and after the giving of the law, it is called here, and *Rom. ix. 4.* (see the note there) in the plural number the covenants, tho' for substance it was one and the same covenant, which consisted of many promises, or was all made up of free and gracious promises, in opposition to the covenant of works; and, among others, that covenant of promise which was made with *Abraham*, and had the sign of circumcision annexed to it, is by no means to be excluded,

covenant of works, consists of many exceeding great and precious promises, that were delivered with various enlargements in the publication of them at different times; and all centered in Christ and salvation by him, in whom all nations were to be blessed, (*Gen. xxii. 18. and xxvi. 4.*); and being in these miserable, helpless, and abandoned circumstances, ye neither had, nor could have any solid, rational, or well-grounded hope of deliverance from deserved wrath, much less of a glorious resurrection of the body, and an inheritance of eternal life; yea, with respect to the knowledge, belief and fear, worship and profession of the only true God, ye really were *practical* and *speculative* atheists, (*ver. 1.*) and lived, as such, after the course of this world, (*ver. 2.*) and in all parts of the earth where-ever your lot was cast; and consequently, ye then had no spiritual communion with him, or gracious communications from him; ye neglecting him, and being neglected by him, while ye worshipped and served only them *that are by nature no gods.* (*Gal. iv. 8.*)

12 But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

13 But now, unworthy as ye were, and unlikely to find mercy, ye, through the astonishing dispensation of divine condescension and grace, are brought into a special relation and union to Christ, the only Saviour, by means of the gospel, and through faith in him; so that ye, who in the days of your former unregeneracy were in a perishing state, far from God, (*Pf. lxxiii. 27.*) and far from Christ, and from his church and covenant, and from all good hope of salvation, (*ver. 12.*) are recovered to a state of friendship with God, and of intimate communion with him and with his church, and to a humble hope and confidence in him, according to his covenant, into which he has taken you through the merit and application of the atoning blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

14 For he is the great and only peace-maker, medium, and center of union between God and us and one another, whether we be believing *Jews* or *Gentiles*: And our reconciliation to God and each other, after all the variance that has been between him and us, and between us among ourselves, is brought about alone by him, who has united the believers of both these two grand divisions of people into one church or fold under himself, as their great Shepherd, (*John x. 16.*) and has cemented them together in heart and affection, as one family,

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excluded, but seems rather to be particularly referred to, because the apostle had just before been speaking of *circumcision*, which was a peculiar privilege of the church of *Israel*,

and the external token of their visible covenant-relation to God, in which the *Gentiles* formerly had no share or interest.

mily, or mystical body, that are partakers of the same privileges by the gospel, (*Gal. iii. 28, 29.*) And as there was a wall of separation in the temple, under the Old Testament-oconomy, between the court of *Israel* and the court of the *Gentiles*, which admitted the former to, and excluded the latter from, a near access to God in the holy place; and as this wall was emblematical of the ceremonial law, which kept the *Jews* and *Gentiles* at a distance from each other, and the *Gentiles* at a distance from God, Christ has now demolished or taken away that, and every other mark of distinction and distance between us, who are of different nations, by introducing a better and more extensive dispensation of grace, wherein believing *Gentiles* are allowed to make as near access to God, and to be partakers of all the privileges of his sanctuary, (which was typical of the gospel-church) as fully as the believing *Jews*.

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace.

15 He has done this, as having by his crucifixion in the flesh, (*ver. 16.*) fulfilled, and so put an end to, vacated and disannulled the force, and taken away the obligation of any longer observing that \*, which had eventually proved the occasion and cause of the most inveterate animosity and hatred, opposition and contention, with regard both to spiritual and temporal concerns, between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, even the ceremonial law, which was a system of positive precepts, consisting of abundance of ritual institutions, that in themselves were of an indifferent nature, and were obligatory to the *Jews*, only by virtue of a divine command. Christ, I say, has abolished these by his death, to the end that, as the great head, in whom all things were to be gathered in one, (*chap. i. 10.*) he might unite both these distant parties to each other; and that he might make out of both one church, formed as new creatures, according to the image of God by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and framed together for gospel-

#### N O T E.

\* The enmity, here signifies the cause of enmity by a usual metonymy, which pass the effect for the cause, in like manner as Christ, who is the procuring cause, the author, the maker, and giver of peace, was called in the preceding verse *our peace*; and so by the enmity is meant the ceremonial law, which was as a wall of separation between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and in the next words is styled the law of commandments contained in ordinances, by way of distinction from the moral law, that great rule of righteousness, which, as such, neither was, nor can be abolished, as the apostle says this law is. And in the parallel epistle to the Colossians, (*chap. ii. 14, 16, 17.*) this ceremonial law is called the *hand-writing*

of ordinances, so far as they related to meats and drinks, new-moons and holy-days, which were a shadow of things to come, the body of which is Christ. And this was the law, that occasioned the most bitter enmity between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as it was zealously contended for by one, and violently opposed by the other, and kept up such a distinction and difference between them as made them refuse the offices of common civility to each other, which was carried to such a height of uncharitableness among the carnal *Jews* against the poor *Gentiles*, as even to forbid the apostles to speak to the *Gentiles* that they might be saved. 1 Thess. ii. 16.



gospel-worship and new obedience, and equally partakers, by a new constitution under him, of all the blessings that pertain to the kingdom of grace in this world and kingdom of glory in that which is to come. In this manner he has brought about an entire harmony and friendship between believers of all nations among themselves, as one spiritual body, they being united by faith and love to him, and to one another in and thro' him.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby :

16 And that he might not only bring *Jews* and *Gentiles* into a state of spiritual and holy friendship and communion one with another ; but might likewise make up the great controversy that lay between God and each of these parties, on account of their transgressions of the law, which they respectively were under, and might bring believers of both sorts, without any further distinction of nations, into a state of peace and favour with God in one church, or mystical body, of which Christ is the head †, he has reconciled them to him by virtue of his sufferings on the cross, *when his ownself bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; and once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,* (1 Pet. ii. 24. and iii. 18.) he having thereby not only taken away the ground of enmity that had so long subsisted between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by abolishing the ceremonial law, but having also *taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, which had made the breach between God and them severally, and had cast him and them into a state of enmity to each other.

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

17 And in pursuit of this great and blessed design, that it might be effectual to both these parties of men, he came in the ministry of his servants after his Ascension to heaven, and by the powerful operation of his Spirit, and published the glad tidings of restored peace and friendship to those of you that were *Gentiles* in a state of nature, and as such were far from God, and Christ, and the covenant of promises, and far from any good hope toward God, and from a state of favour with him, (ver. 12.) And he made this preaching of the gospel effectual to the salvation of those believers \*

of

#### N O T E S.

† In one body may relate either to Christ's mystical body, the church, of which he is head, as 'tis said, Col. i. 18. with regard to which 'tis said of all believers, *that being many, they are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another,* (Eph. iii. 5.) or it may relate to the natural body of Christ, with regard to which 'tis said, (Col. i. 26, 27) " Ye that were some time alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now have

" been reconciled in the body of his flesh thro' death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouched in his sight." And as the epistle to the Colossians is similar to this, and casts great light upon it, we are naturally led to take in both these senses.

\* By them that were afar off is undoubtedly meant the *Gentiles* before their conversion, as they had been described under this character, ver. 12, 13. and, in opposition to these,

of the *Jewish* nation, who had the gospel of peace preached to them; and so, without distinction of nations, he has brought some of both sorts into a state of peace and friendship with God and one another, they being all one in Christ without any difference.

18 For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.

18 For such is the efficacy of Christ's death, and of his gospel, attended with the power of his Spirit, toward sinners of all nations, that in his name and thro' his mediation, who speaks of himself as *the door* of entrance, and *the way* to the Father, (*John* x. 9. and xiv. 6.) all of us, whether we be believing *Jews* or *Gentiles*, have equal liberty of drawing nigh to God, and coming to him by faith in prayer, and in every other sacred ordinance, and are introduced like favourites into his gracious presence, that we may freely pour out our hearts before him, and offer up our addresses to him with humble confidence of being heard and answered; and so, according to the scheme of gospel-worship, answerable to the oeconomy of salvation, we have this comfortable access into the holiest through the blood of Jesus, (*Heb.* x. 19.) by the guidance, aid, and assistance of one and the same Spirit, who is given to true believers of both sorts, as the spirit of grace and supplication, and the spirit of adoption, to encourage and enable us to come to God the Father, as the Father of our Lord Jesus, and as our reconciled God and Father in him. (*Rom.* viii. 15.)

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

19 Now therefore, ye *Gentile* believers, being reconciled and brought nigh to God, are no longer strangers to him and his covenant of promises, nor aliens from the common-wealth of *Israel*, and from the privileges of their church-state, as ye formerly were, (*ver.* 12.) but, like freemen and fellow-citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, ye are now entitled to, and made joint-partakers with the believing *Jews*, of all the blessings that pertain to the inheritance of the saints; and not only so, but ye are brought into a near relation to God, as domestic

#### N O T E.

by them that were nigh, is not meant them that were made nigh by the blood of Christ, as the apostle had spoke of the believing *Gentiles*, *ver.* 13. but 'tis meant of the *Jewish* nation, who, on account of their external relation to God, as his visible church, were said to be a people near to him, (*Psal.* cxlviii. 14.) Now according to that ancient prophecy, *Isa.* lvii. 19 where God says, *I create the fruit of the lips* "Peace peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near," Christ in his personal ministry came to the *Jews*, who by reason of their visible relation to him, as the God and King of *Israel*, are called "his own, to whom he came, and his own re-

ceived him not," (*John* i. 11.); and his being most immediately sent to the *Jews* *from the house of Israel*, (*Mat.* xv. 24.) his personal ministry was chiefly confined to them. But as the apostles and others of his servants preached by his commission, and in his name and stead, as ambassadors for him, 2 *Cor.* v. 18, 19, 20. so he may be said to have preached to *Jews* and *Gentiles* by them, in like manner as he is said to have preached to his Spirit to the old world in the mind of *Noah*, 1 *Peter* iii. 19. This is what our apostle calls *Christ's speaking in him*, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 3. and this I take to be principally intended in the words before us.

domestics that dwell in his house, and are employed in his service under his special care, and as children of your heavenly Father by regeneration and adoption, and consequently *heirs of God through Christ*, (Rom. viii. 17. and Gal. iv. 7.)

19 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;

20 And ye are still more closely united to Christ, and to God in him, not only as citizens to their sovereign, and as children to their father; but as a building to its foundation, which is another figure under which the church of Christ may be considered in its relation to him, (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) who is a sure foundation, which God himself has laid in *Sion*, besides which no man can lay any other, but which is ministerially laid both by my preaching, (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) and by the doctrine of the twelve apostles, as master-builders, under Christ, in the New Testament-dispensation, (Rev. xxi. 14.) as it also has been in the writings of the ancient prophets, (Ps. cxviii. 22. and Isa. xxviii. 16.) which testify'd of Christ, (John v. 39.) The doctrine of all these is for substance the same, with regard to eternal life and salvation by Jesus Christ, who is not only the rock, on which he has built his church, (Matt. xvi. 18.) ; but is also the principle corner-stone, which unites, holds, and binds together both believing *Jews* and *Gentiles* in himself as one church, and gives strength, solidity, and beauty to the whole spiritual edifice that is erected upon him\*.

21 In whom all the building, fully framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

21 In union with whom, and by virtue derived from him, the whole fabric of the universal church, consisting of believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and every member of it, being placed in proper order for the use of the whole, rises up like a great pile of living materials into a spiritual building, by a continual addition of new converts, and by a further growth of each of them, which are animated and influenced by their living foundation, unto the completing of a sacred temple; not like that of stones, which God ordered to be built at *Jerusalem*, and was typical of this: But a temple of a spiritual nature, even his church, which is formed by and for Christ, and is dedicated to him, and inhabited by him, who is *the Lord of his own house*, (Heb. iii. 6.)

in

#### N O T E.

\* *The heads of Israel* that bore the weight of government, and were their glory, are called the *chief*, and the *stay*, or as 'tis in the "Hebrew (*רָאשֵׁי*) the corners of the people" (1 Sam. xiv. 38. and Is. xix. 13.) accordingly Christ is called the "chief corner-stone" and the head-stone of the corner," Ps.

cxviii. 22. because the church depends as entirely upon him as its *foundation*, when consider'd in allusion to a house or building, as it does upon him, as its *head*, when considered in allusion to a natural and political body. (Vid. *Brz.* in loc.)

in which he manifests his gracious presence, displays his glory, and is worshipped and glorified.

21 In whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

22 In whom, as vitally united to him, and framed into the order of the gospel by his authority and influence, and in his name, ye also, as a peculiar church made up of *Gentile* and *Jewish* believers, are built together, without difference of privileges and benefits, as a living temple, which God has consecrated for himself, and resides in, as he also doth in the heart of every true believer, by the special presence, light, and grace of his Holy Spirit, *who dwells in you, and shall be in you*, (John xiv. 17.) till ye be received up to himself in glory.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How deplorable is our state by the fall ! We were dead in trespasses and sins ; children of wrath by nature, and of disobedience by practice ; and strongly addicted to a gratification of all abominable appetites of the soul and body, according to the evil customs of this world, under the power and influence of Satan, who rules and works in us by our own free consent. But how amazing is the grace of God, in recovering sinners of these characters from this hideous state ! He is rich in mercy toward them, through Jesus Christ, in the greatness of his love, with which he has loved a chosen people among them, and which he manifests with endearing kindness in all the ages of time, and to an endless eternity : He quickens them from their death in sin to a life of righteousness, by virtue of, and in conformity to their risen Saviour ; and highly advances them in him, as their head in whom they, though not personally, yet *representatively* are already raised up, and made to sit together in the mansions of heavenly glory, till they shall actually in their own persons sit down there with him : And he has shewn the exceeding riches of his grace to former converts, even among *Gentile*-sinners, as patterns and earnest of what he design'd to do in succeeding generations, thro' Jesus Christ, for all that shall, through grace, believe in him after their example. Behold God's way of saving sinners ! 'Tis not by any works of their own, lest they should take the glory of it to themselves ; but merely by his own grace thro' faith in Christ Jesus ; and this faith is not wrought in them for any worthiness, or by any power of their own ; but is the free gift of God, whose curious workmanship they are, by a new creation in Christ unto good works, according to his eternal appointment, that they should practice and persevere in them. How humble should we be in reflection upon what we were by nature, as without Christ and all the blessings of the new covenant, without God or any good hope towards him ; and in a perishing state, as strangers far from him. But how should we of the believing *Gentiles*, as well as believing *Jews*, rejoice and bless God for what we are made to be in Christ, through faith in him ! All obstructions to our reconciliation with them, and to a reconciliation of both with God as one body, are now remov'd ; we are brought nigh, into a state of peace with God, by the blood of Christ's cross, and have free liberty of access to the Father by one Spirit thro' him ; are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the family of God, equal partakers of all those privileges and blessings by means of the gospel, which Christ himself may still be said to preach to us by the ministry of his servants : And we are built on him as the only foundation, which is laid in the inspired writings of the apostles and prophets ; and are built up together as his church, for a habitation of God through the Spirit, till we come to dwell in his immediate blissful presence for ever.

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle sets forth the dignity of his office in its relation to the Gentiles, for which he suffered imprisonment, 1, 2. His qualifications for it, 3,—6. His call to it, together with the noble purposes that were answered by it, 7,—12. He offers up a most excellent and comprehensive prayer for the Ephesians, 13,—19. And concludes with a grand and suitable doxology, 20, 21.*

## TEXT.

FOR this cause  
I Paul the  
prisoner of Jesus  
Christ, for you  
Gentiles;

2 If ye have  
heard of the dis-  
pensation of the  
grace of God  
which is given  
me to you-ward:

3 How that  
by revelation he  
made known un-  
to

## PARAPHRASE.

ON account of my asserting and maintaining that the believing *Gentiles* are now no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, &c. (*chap. ii. 19, &c.\**) I Paul, am at this very time suffering bonds and imprisonment at *Rome*, through the implacable malice, and indefatigable opposition of the carnal *Jews*, who have brought me under this confinement; and they are especially exasperated against me, as they were at *Ephesus*, (*Acts xxii. 27,—33.*) for my faithfulness and zeal in preaching to you and other *Gentiles*, the doctrine of justification alone through faith in Christ, without the deeds of the law, (*Acts xxii. 21, 22. and xxvi. 17,—21.*) under which consideration of my sufferings, I glory in them: And ye cannot reasonably doubt, but that I undergo them on your account, and for your spiritual advantage;

2 Since† ye must needs have heard of the divine commission which was freely given to me, as a steward in Christ's house and kingdom, to go to the *Gentiles*, (*Acts ix. 15. and xxii. 21. and xxvi. 17, 18.*) and to dispense the gospel of the grace of God chiefly to you, and others of that character, which I have accordingly done for many years, wherever I came, that by means thereof ye might believe and be saved.

3 It is evident from what ye have heard of this, that, to fit and qualify me for so important a service, the Lord Jesus has discovered to me, by the immediate inspiration

## NOTES.

\* Some expositors, to make out the connection of this verse, consider all that follows it, 'till we come to the 14th, as a *parenthesis*, and join *this* and *that* together, where the words *for this cause* are re-assumed in the apostle's prayer for the *Ephesians*. But if in the first verse we only supply the verb *am*, which is often defective in the *Greek*, and read it with *Erasmus*, *Beza*, and many others, "For this cause I Paul am the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles," its connection stands obvious and easy, both with

the latter part of the preceding chapter, and the verses that immediately follow it.

† The particle (*αὐτοῦ*) if may be considered, not as a particle of *denial*, but of *affirmation*; and so may be rendered *inasmuch as* or *since*, or *seeing that*, as the like particle (*ὅτι*) signifies, when our Lord said, "If, or as surely as, I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," &c. *John xiv. 3.* and so no more argument can be drawn from hence, that the apostle had not preached at *Ephesus*. (See Dr. *Whitby* on the place.)

to me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words,

inspiration of his Spirit, (*ver. v.*) and by repeated visions and revelations, (*Acts xvi. 16, 17. 2 Cor. xii. 1, 7.*) the great mystery of the gospel concerning salvation alone through him, as God manifested in the flesh, and the calling of the *Gentiles*; which is indeed a matter of stupendous wisdom and sovereignty, condescension and grace, surpassing all our thoughts, (*ver. 19.*) according to what I have (*εὐαγγελισάμην*) briefly said a little before in this epistle about it, (*chaps. i. ii.*)

4 Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)

4 By which, when ye review and reflect upon it, and compare it with what I am going still further to advance, ye may clearly perceive, that the knowledge of this profound and astonishing mystery has been revealed to me by Jesus Christ, and that I am fully acquainted with it, as it relates to his unsearchable riches, (*ver. 8.*) that are preached, and distributed even among the *Gentiles*.

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit;

5 Which mystery, in the former ages of the church, before the law, and under the law, was not made known to the *Gentiles* at all; nor so fully, distinctly, and plainly revealed, especially in many of its glorious circumstances, to any of the human race; no, not any of the most eminent of God's favourites under former dispensations, (*Matth. xiii. 17.*) \* as it is now manifested in a supernatural way to the apostles of our Lord, whom he has sanctify'd that they may be holy in heart and life, and has set apart for his service; and to the New Testament extraordinary prophets, by the immediate inspiration of his Spirit, in consequence of his ascension to heaven, *that he might fill all things*, (*chap. iv. 10, 11.*)

6 That the *Gentiles* should be fellow-heirs, and

6 The mystery which I have chiefly in mine eye is, that even the *idolatrous Gentiles*, (*chap. ii. 12.*) should not

#### N O T E.

\* The gospel had been indeed preached unto Abraham, and the calling of the *Gentiles* had been revealed in many antient promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, as in *Gen. xxii. 18.* and *xlix. 10.* *Psal. ii. 8.* and *Isa. xl. 10.* and *xlix. 6.* But in what manner, by what means, and at what time, this salvation should be accomplished, and extended to them, and that as they should be one body and fellow-heirs with the unbelieving Jews, was little known or understood; and notwithstanding the plain declarations of our Lord himself about it, (*John x. 16.* and *xii. 10, — 32.*) and his express commission and promise to his disciples relating to it, *Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.* and *Mark xvi. 15, 16.* yet some of the apostles themselves, as well as other converted Jews, were surprized and shocked at the thought of the *Gentiles* being made equal partakers of the blessings of the

gospel with themselves, and that without their being circumcised, and observing the law of Moses, as appears from the scruples that Peter made about going in to the *Gentiles*, and the astonishment of the Jews at their receiving the Holy Ghost, *Acts chap. x.* and from the debates that arose in the council at Jerusalem, upon Paul and Barnabas's reporting the conversion of the *Greecians* by their ministry, *Acts xv. 1, — 29.* These, and such like, were the things that were not known before, as they were now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets, which is meant not of the Old Testament-prophets, but of the inspired prophets of the New Testament, such as are mentioned *chap. iv. 11.* and *1 Cor. xiv. 29, — 32.* For what was now revealed: them is here spoken of, in opposition to what was not made known in former ages.

and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:

not only be admitted to some share of advantage under the expected Messiah; but should, together with the believing *Jews*, be fellow-citizens and joint-heirs of the heavenly inheritance with them, through the faith of Christ, as if they had been the natural seed of *Abraham*, (Gal. iii. 29.) ; and that they should be incorporated with them into the same church, to partake of all its privileges equally with themselves, and be members of the same mystical body of Christ, to derive all enlightning, quickning, sanctifying, and comforting influence from him, and hold their right and claim to all the blessings of the new covenant under him, as their head; and that they, in as full a manner as any of the *Jews*, should be interested in the whole covenant of promises, inclusive of all its spiritual and eternal benefits; and particularly that the great promise of the New Testament, even the Holy Ghost, that eminent promise of the Father, (*Aets* i. 4.) should be fulfilled unto them, and they should be made partakers of his gifts and saving graces, as he is shed upon them abundantly thro' Jesus Christ our Saviour, in virtue of his purchase for them, and of their union with him, in whom all the promises of God are yea, and amen, (*Tit.* iii. 6. and *3 Cor.* i. 20.) and so the blessing of Abraham, in its utmost extent, should come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that they, as well as *Jews*, might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, (Gal. iii. 14.) by means of the gospel which is now preached unto them.

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power.

7 Of which gospel I have the honour of being ordained and called to be a preacher and an apostle, that I might publish it in all its light, fulness, and glory, and in its widest extent to *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*. I did not thrust myself into this high office, or take this honour to myself; no, nor did I receive it of man, or by the hands of any man whatsoever, (*Gal.* i. 1.) but I came into it by the immediate authority of Jesus Christ himself, and of God the Father who raised him from the dead, according to the free gift or grace of the apostleship\*, which God of his own mere favour conferred upon me, in that he not only converted me, but likewise

#### N O T E.

\* As in ver. 2. the gospel is called the grace of God, which it also is, *Tit.* ii. 11. because it is the gift of his free favour, and discovers the grace that is in his heart, and that he has provided in Christ for sinners, and because it is the means of his conveying grace to them; so here the apostleship seems, for like reasons, to be meant by what the

apostle calls the grace of God given to him; for the following words shew that he had herein a peculiar respect to the grace which called him to, and endowed him with, gifts for the apostolic office; and this at other times he speaks of as the grace, and the grace of God that was given to him, (*Rom.* xv. 16. and *Gal.* ii. 9)

likewise led me into the deepest mysteries of the gospel; and so furnished me for, and called me to this honourable office, which he made effectual by the mighty operation both of his miraculous and saving power in and by me, to the benefit of my own soul, and of multitudes of others, especially among the *Gentiles*. (Gal. ii. 18.)

8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the *Gentiles* the unfathomable riches of Christ;

8 Unto me in a peculiar manner, who, while I magnify my office, and extol the riches of divine grace toward me, and toward *Gentile* sinners, cannot tell how to think and speak meanly enough of myself, and want words sufficiently to express the humbling sense I have of my own unworthiness †. Unto me, who really am, and unfeignedly account myself, unworthy to be numbered among the saints, when I consider what an inveterate enemy and injurious violent persecuter of Christ, his people and cause, I formerly was, and should have continued to be to this very day, had I been left to the chosen way of my own heart; yea, in reflection on these detestable things, I think of myself as the meanest, ay, far below the very meanest of all that are truly sanctified, (which, blessed be God, is now my case) and as *not meet to be called an apostle*, (1 Cor. xv. 9.) Even unto such a worthless, undeserving, hell-deserving wretch as myself, this astonishing, matchless, condescending favour is shown, that I, above all the rest of the apostles, should be pitched upon, and employed to publish among the poor idolatrous *Gentiles* the glad tidings of salvation, and to be instrumental, in the hand of the Spirit, of making known, and conveying to multitudes of them, those exceeding riches of mercy and merit, of grace and glory, that are treasured up in Christ, and proposed in the gospel, by and through him, to the worst of sinners, even among *them*; and riches that can never be fathomed or exhausted, told over or traced out (*ἀνέκχριστον*) in all their endless variety, excellence, and fulness.

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,

9 And the great design of God, in honouring me with this commission, was to enlighten all sorts of men among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, by means of my ministry, that they might clearly perceive what a happy communion believers of all nations have in the exceeding great and glorious blessings of the gospel, as they

are

#### N O T E.

† Here are the noblest strains of flowing eloquence, to paint out the exceeding low opinion the apostle had of himself, and his exalted thoughts of Christ, and of the fullness of the excellent blessings that are trea-

sured up in him, and diffused abroad by him. He seems to stretch the powers of language to set himself as low, and the riches of the grace of Christ as high, as possible.



God, who created all things by Jesus Christ :

are one church or body under Christ their head ; which may very properly be stiled a *mystery*, not only because of the unfathomable depth of God's sovereignty, wisdom, and grace therein, but because it lay concealed as an entire secret in his eternal counsel and purpose, (*ver. 11. and chap. i. 11.*) before all ages, and has under all former dispensations, ever since the beginning of this world, been suggested only in some general hints, while the whole scheme, as it is now revealed by the gospel, was still reserved with impenetrable concealment in the mind of God himself, who created all things, from the highest to the lowest of them, by Jesus Christ, the Father therein acting by, and together with his Son ; so that *without him was not any thing made that was made*, (*John i. 2, 3. Col. i. 16. and Heb. i. 2.*)

10 To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

10 This glorious revelation is also now made, to the end and purpose that all the ranks and orders of the angelic nature, which may be called *principalities and powers in heavenly places*, because they *excel in strength*, (*Psal. ciii. 20.*) and are employed as *ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation*, (*Heb. i. 14.*) in this lower world, though their ordinary residence be in heaven. (See the note on *chap. i. 21.*) This discovery, I say, is now made, that they, who desire to look into those things, (*1 Pet. i. 12.*) might behold, and contemplate with joy and praise, the adorable wisdom of God, which now shines forth in numberless displays of various glories, as exhibited in the doctrines and ministrations, blessings, and privileges of the New Testament-church.

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord :

11 All which is now done exactly agreeable to God's eternal pre-ordination, or *purpose in himself*, (*chap. i. 9.*) \* which he formed with a gracious regard to his church, as considered in Christ their head, even our Saviour and Lord, and which he intended in due time to execute just after the manner in which he has now brought it to pass by him, (*Rom. viii. 28. and 1 Pet. i. 20, 21.*)

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

12 In and through whom, as the only mediator between God and man, we have great liberty and enlargement of spirit in our transactions with God, as our reconciled God, Father, and Friend, and make near approaches to him on a throne of grace in our solemn acts of worship, and in the delightful communion which

#### NOTES.

\* The word here rendered *purpose* (*προσέτις*) is in the New Testament always, except in the case of the *few-bread*, (*Heb. ix. 2.*) translated *purpose*, and signifies an *internal* act of the will or mind ; but I do not find that it is ever used for disposing by ex-

ternal operations or events ; and therefore I take it here, as usual elsewhere, to relate to the *original purpose* of God *before the world*, (*προ τω αἰῶνι*) as it is expressed, *1 Cor. ii. 7.*

which he admits us to, and *that* with humble assurance, as to his favour towards us, and our acceptance in his sight, and as to the audience of our prayers for things agreeable to his will, and our final salvation; which holy confidence results from, and is produced in us by the faith which Christ is the author of, and which terminates immediately upon him, in a firm dependence on what he has done and suffered for us, and in a fiducial commitment of ourselves and all our concerns to him, who is in us our hope of glory, (Col. i. 27.)

12: Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

13 In reflection therefore on all these things, I earnestly intreat you to labour, by divine grace, not to be disheartened, (*μὴ ἐκκένῃς*) or any way frightened into negligence or despondency in your Christian course and profession, by reason of the sufferings which I endure, not for any evil done by me, but merely in the cause of Christ, for the sake of my preaching the gospel to you Gentiles, (ver. 1.); but I beg that ye may rather be encouraged, strengthened, and animated in his ways by them, which are really a peculiar honour put upon you as well as me, inasmuch as Christ has not only sent me to publish the glad tidings of salvation, but has likewise called me to sufferings on that account, in confirmation of the truth of the doctrines which I preached unto you, and by means of which ye were brought to believe in him †. And this will be indeed your glory, if ye are so far from being dismayed or offended at my tribulations, as to be so much the more established in your faith by them.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

14 For this reason, I, in the most humble, reverential, and solemn addresses on my bended knees, recommend you to the grace of the eternal and Covenant-Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also our Covenant-Father and friend in him.

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

15 Of whom, and of the Father through him, the whole body of true worshippers, which make but one family, consisting of all the saints, together with the angels in heaven \*, and of all believers in every place and nation upon earth, as being gathered together under Christ

#### N O T E S.

† *Berni* observes upon this place, that the church is *washed* by the blood of martyrs, but is only *washed* by the blood of Christ.

\* *Of whom*, by the construction may refer either to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the next immediate antecedent, and gives power to believers to become the sons of God, (John i. 12.); or may refer to God the Father, who is the principal subject of the foregoing sentence, and makes believers his sons,

(2 Cor. vi. 18. and 1 John iii. 1.) The Jews commonly speak of the angels as God's family in heaven, and of men, especially of his covenant-people, as his family on earth. (See Dr *Whitby* on the place.) And, supposing the apostle to allude to this, the angels must be at least included in the family which he here speaks of. (See the note on chap. I. 10.)

Christ their head, have received a much more excellent name than that of the children of *Abraham*, in which the carnal *Jews* vainly boast; they have the title, honour, and advantage of being called *the children of God*, as high favourites, nearly related to him, owning and loving him, and being owned and beloved by him, and living in their Father's house.

15 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man;

16 My prayer to this great and blessed God, who has done so much for you already, is, that in a way and manner like his infinite self, answerable to his own immensity of wisdom, faithfulness, and power, goodness, mercy, and grace, which is his glory, and in the enjoyment of which the most glorious riches consist, My prayer, I say, is, that he would please in his free favour, and inexhaustible liberality, to grant unto you that ye may be, yet more and more, fortified against all the corruptions of your own hearts, and the temptations of Satan and of this evil world; may be invigorated for, and in, every duty and service; may be animated with holy courage to do and suffer the whole will of God; and may be enabled to exercise every grace, and abound in all comfort and holiness, and to hold on your way, and hold out to the end, through all opposition and danger, by the powerful operation and assistance of the divine Spirit, who, according to his peculiar province in the oeconomy of salvation, carries on and perfects, as well as begins his good work in the renewed soul, which is the best and inmost part of the man. (See the note on *Rom. vii. 22.*)

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

17 I further humbly and earnestly beseech him, that Christ, together with, and by his Spirit, may be constantly present to your minds in realizing and appropriating acts of faith, whereby he is received and entertained in the soul; and may have a sensible abode in your hearts, by continual gracious impressions and delightful manifestations of his love to you, as those that are united by faith and love to him: that so, like trees well rooted and settled in a good soil, ye may be deeply fixed, and firmly established in an experimental and assuring knowledge of his matchless and endearing love to you, and in the best returns of steadfast and ardent love to him again, and to the Father through him, and to all his children for his sake, *because he first loved you*, (1 John iv. 19.)

18 May he able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length,

18 And I humbly beg of God, that being thus rooted and grounded in love, ye may be enabled, as far as the human mind can reach, under the utmost advantage of divine revelation, faith, and experience, and of

length and depth,  
and height;

the enlightning and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, to apprehend, (*καταλαβειν*) and be suitably affected with, the immense love of Christ, that ye may conceive, as clearly as possible, what is the unmeasurable extent of it, as it reaches to the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, to all ranks and degrees of sinners, and to all manner of spiritual and heavenly blessings, according as God has chosen you to them in him, (*chap. i. 3, 4.*); and what is its unbeginning and endless length, as it is from everlasting to everlasting, (*Psal. ciii. 17.*); and what is its unfathomable depth, as it hath brought him, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, to the lowest state of humiliation and sufferings in the form of a servant, and to the ignominious death of the cross, (*Phil. ii. 6,—8.*); and as it has stooped and condescended to you in your low estate, to raise you out of the deepest abyss of sin and misery, (*Psal. xl. 2. and Zech. ix. 11.*); and to deliver you from the wrath to come, (*1 Thess. i. 10.*); and what is its superlative height, as he is still mindful of you in his exalted state at the Father's right hand, where he is placed in mediatorial honours higher than the heavens, and ever lives to make intercession for you, (*Heb. vii. 25, 26.*); and as he has advanced you to all the inconceivable dignities and privileges that belong to the adoption of sons, and will in due time raise you up to the heavenly mansions of unspeakable and endless glory. (*John xiv. 2, 3.*)

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

19 And my heart's desire for you is, that ye may be enabled, yet more and more, to have just apprehensions and enlarged views by faith, together with an experimental feeling of the virtue, power, and sweetness of the transcendent, free, and sovereign love of Christ, and of God through him, in its most excellent manifestations, fruits and effects, which in itself, and in its wonderful operations, provisions and designs, infinitely surpasses all the comprehension or adequate ideas of men and angels, (*ver. 8. and 10.*) in every one of the aforesaid boundless dimensions: And all this I beg of God for you, to the end that, (*sc.*) upon the whole, ye may be, still more and more, partakers of a divine nature, (*2 Pet. i. 4.*) and may be enriched, as much as possible, with all that fulness of light and grace, holiness, joy, and peace, in this present life, which God has designed and prepared in his eternal counsels of wisdom and love, and in the merit of his Son, and has promised in his covenant, and communicates to his chief favourites, at their best seasons, while they are here; and that ye may, at length, arrive at the most

most perfect vision and enjoyment of him, and spotless conformity to him, in his immediate presence, where *is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* (Psal. xvi. 11.) and see the note on Col. ii. 9.)

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

20 Now therefore, to shut up this comprehensive prayer on your behalf, with a doxology, that may raise our hope, unworthy as we are in ourselves of its full accomplishment, unto the great and blessed God, the only object of our faith and expectation, worship and obedience, \* to whom I have presented my humble supplications in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator, (*ver. 14.*) for the highest and most extensive blessings that can be wished, or that we can be capable of enjoying: To him who is almighty, with whom nothing is too hard to do, but who is infinitely able to answer this and every other, even the most enlarged prayer of faith, and to fulfil our utmost desires, according to the propensions and designs of his boundless love; yea, who is easily able to do superabundantly more than we have already asked, or can possibly petition for, or conceive of, and *that* in a way of divine operation, which we have already had abundant experience of, and which is correspondent to the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe. (*Chap. i. 19, 20.*)

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

21 To this all-sufficient, gracious, covenant-God, be ascribed all possible honour, in a way of faith and love, adoration, worship, and obedience, thanksgiving, blessing, and praise, on account of his infinite perfections, and of his counsels and works of creation, providence and grace, in the universal church, both visible and invisible, in heaven and earth, and in every particular church, and by all the members of each of them, which are included in the catholic church; may this solemn tribute be presented to him by them, in the most spiritual and acceptable manner, through Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator, in and by whom all our prayers and praises are to be offered, that they may be accepted on his account, (*John xiv. 13, 14. and 15, 16. Col. iii. 17. Heb. xiii. 15. and 1 Pet. ii. 5.*); and may this be done through all the periods of time, and all generations in this world, and to the endless ages of eternity

in

#### N O T E.

\* This noble doxology is admirably adapted to encourage and strengthen our faith, that it might not stagger at the great things which the apostle had been praying for, as though they were too much for God to give,

or for his people to expect from him, whose thoughts and ways are as much above ours as the heavens are above the earth, and whose love exceeds all the dimensions whereby we are to measure things.

in that which is to come ! Thus it shall be, and thus I, and all that love him in sincerity and truth, heartily wish and pray it may be, in token of which let them all join with me in saying, *Amen*.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

What a blessed dispensation is that of the gospel ! The wisdom of God in the mystery of salvation, and the riches of his grace, even to us Gentile-sinners, according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, are now displayed, to men and angels, with much greater evidence and extent by the Holy Spirit, in the writings of inspired men, than ever were experienced or made known to former ages. How equal now are believers of all nations in spiritual privileges and blessings ! They are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the great promise of the Spirit, through Jesus Christ, by means of the gospel ; and they have holy boldness and freedom of access to a throne of grace, with humble hope, and confidence of acceptance, by faith in him. How gloriously does grace reign throughout the gospel ! It is the gospel of the grace of God : Grace has provided and given it, and sends and qualifies ministers to preach it with success ; its whole scheme is a doctrine of free grace, and all its important blessings are conveyed merely by grace. And O how unsearchable are the riches of Christ, that it reveals and brings to us ! With what deep self-abasement, and affecting admiration of divine favour, should ministers reflect upon the honour of being called and qualified to preach them ! And who can express the happiness of those that are enriched with them ! They have the sweetest supports under all present tribulations ; and when they are enabled, with faith and patience, to bear them, especially those that are, even to imprisonment, for the sake of Christ, this will prove to be an honourable testimony to the truth and power of the gospel, and will turn to their own best account, and be their glory : And all this they may comfortably hope for, since nothing is too great or good for faith to ask, or for God to give, on Christ's account. What more comprehensive prayer can be offered, than " that God would grant us, according to the riches of his glory, to be " strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner-man ; that Christ may dwell " in our hearts by faith ; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be " able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and " depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ; " and that we may be filled with all the fulness of God ? " Whose thoughts can fully stretch to all this ! " But God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all " that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." In what a humble and adoring manner, as with bended knees ; and yet with what encouragement and hope should we address him, as the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named ! And with what high ascriptions of glory should he be worshipped, through Jesus Christ, by the church, in all generations upon earth, and by saints and angels to all eternity in heaven ! Amen, so let it be, and so it shall be.

### C H A P. IV.

*The apostle proceeds from the doctrinal to the practical part of this epistle, which he introduces with a general exhortation to the whole church, to walk worthy of their Christian calling, 1. And then to recommend and exemplify it, he excites them by several weighty arguments to mutual forbearance and union, 2,—6. To a due use of all their spiritual gifts and graces for edification, 7,—16. To pu-*  
rity

city and holiness in heart and life, 17,—24. And to take heed of several sins that were practised among the heathens, but were inconsistent with their Christian profession, 25,—32.

## TEXT.

I Therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

## PARAPHRASE.

Since such great and glorious privileges and blessings, as have been hitherto discoursed of, are freely bestowed upon all, and every one of you that are true believers in Christ, whether ye be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, (*chap.* iii. 6.) I therefore, who am a prisoner in bonds, not for any fault of mine, but by the wise and holy disposal of the Lord Jesus, and for his sake, because I faithfully preach his gospel, in all its extent, to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, (*chap.* iii. 1.) and for his honour and glory, that I might bear a noble testimony, by not only preaching, but also suffering for him; Even I, who am not ashamed of my chain, earnestly intreat you, in his name, and by these bonds, to live, and act with constancy and perseverance to the end, at such an honourable rate as becomes the gospel, (see the note on *Luke* xxi. 36.) and is every way agreeable and ornamental to the high and holy calling of God in Christ Jesus, wherewith ye are called externally by the word, and internally by the efficacious operation of his Spirit, to glory and virtue, and to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 *Pet.* i. 3. and 2 *Thess.* ii. 14.)

1 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

2 As ever ye would bring credit to the gospel, and act suitable to its spiritual privileges and obligations, see to it, that the whole of your behaviour be with all humbleness of mind, esteeming others better than yourselves, (*Phil.* ii. 3.) and abasing your souls before God, under a sense of what ye were by nature, and of your utter unworthiness of the high favours that he hath bestowed upon you; and, with all courteousness, candour, calmness, and sweetness of temper and deportment towards one another: Let this humility and meekness prevail unto all restraints of angry passions, on account of affronts and injuries, though often repeated, that ye may bear them without retaliating or revenging them: And as to the weaknesses and indiscretions, frowardness, and peevish tempers of any of your brethren, of whom better things might be expected, overlook them, or sustain them with a calm and composed spirit, that rather pities and excuses, than is offended with, and would distress your fellow-Christians; and let all this be done from a principle of love to Christ, and to them for his sake; only let it not be

in such a way as shall countenance, or indulge them in any thing that is sinful, which would be, in effect, to hate, rather than to love them, (*Lev. xix. 17.*)

3 Endeavour-  
ing to keep the  
unity of the Spi-  
rit in the bond of  
peace.

3 In this manner carefully study, and lay out yourselves, with the utmost speed and diligence, and by all proper means to maintain and preserve that spiritual union and harmony of souls, which is the fruit of the Spirit, and consists in that mutual peace, which, upon the principles before-mentioned, is the best and strongest bond of your religious society, and of your holy fellowship together in a church-state.

4 There is one  
body, and one  
Spirit, even as ye  
are called in one  
hope of your cal-  
ling;

4 This amiable union ought, by all means, to be cultivated among you, considering the joint-interest and concernment that ye have in such excellent things, as direct and oblige you to be united in heart and affection; as, to mention a few remarkable particulars, The Catholic church is but one mystical body, of which Christ is the Head, and ye are all alike members; and therefore ye should have the same fellow-feeling, concern, and care for one another, (*1 Cor. xii. 25, 26, 27.*) and one and the same Divine and Holy Spirit, of which ye are partakers, animates, guides, and dwells in the whole mystical body, and in every member of it, in whom he also has wrought the same spirit and temper after his one likeness, who is the Spirit of love and peace; and therefore ye ought to act with united hearts, according to his dictates, under his influence, and in resemblance of him: But to have hearts disaffected one to another, is like having two or more souls, and *that* of contrary dispositions and qualities, in one body. Ye are likewise called, by grace, to God's kingdom and glory, (*1 Theff. ii. 12.*) as the *one summary object* of your hope; and in your effectual calling, ye are partakers of *one and the same grace* of hope, which terminates on Christ, as its only foundation; and therefore ye should live in harmony and peace, as heirs together of the grace of life, and expectants of one and the same blessed inheritance of the saints in light.

5 One Lord,  
one faith, one  
baptism,

5 There is *one* Lord and Saviour of all true believers, even Jesus Christ, who is the only Mediator, Head, and King of the church; and therefore ye ought to unite, as with one heart and soul, in your dependance upon him, in your allegiance, love, and obedience to him, and in your sincere affection to all his subjects, according to the laws of his kingdom: There is also *one* and the same *rule* and *doctrine* of faith, and *one object* of it, and *one sort* of like precious faith, which is common to the whole church of Christ,

and



and these are to be entertained and improved by the *same* *actings* of faith in every member of it; and therefore this faith should work by love to him, its glorious object, and to one another for his sake: And the baptism of all that belong to the church of Christ is but *one* in its nature, tendency, and design, whether ye consider it as the *internal* baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which they are renewed and sanctified; or as the *external* ordinance of baptism with water, which is to be *but once* administered, and by which that spiritual benefit is signified; and they, in token of it, are visibly and solemnly devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and are enrolled in the Christian church, and brought under the strongest bonds, to be entirely and unreservedly the Lord's, in whose *one* name, in opposition to all other gods, they are baptized, (see the note and paraphrase on *Matth.* xxviii. 19.) and therefore ye should behave with the utmost unanimity in acting up to character, and answering your obligations, according to your holy principles and profession.

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

6 To conclude these engaging *unities*. The Covenant God and Father of all sincere believers, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, is but *one*, (*Rom.* iii. 29, 30.) and they all stand in the nearest relation to him, as his people and his children \*, who is infinitely above them all in his own nature and perfections, and in his dominion over them; yea, is exalted above all blessing and praise; and whose special influence diffuses through all

#### N O T E.

\* Though God may be stiled "the Father of all things universality, who is above, through, and in them all," as he created and upholds them, and has supreme dominion over them; and as in him we live, and move, and have our being; yet *the Father of all*, &c. in this place evidently means something more peculiar and distinguishing, with special relation to all his people, and to his gracious and effectual operation in them: for this best suits the design of the apostle's argument, and is most agreeable to all the other instances of union before recited, which undoubtedly have a particular and restrained reference to *the church*; and the all here intended admits of a very easy construction, as answering to the *one body*, ver. 4. and to *you all* in the close of this verse. But when the Father of all true believers is said to be *one God*, this no more excludes the Son and Spirit from being God, together with the Father, than Christ's being called *one Lord*, and the Holy Ghost *one Spirit*, ver. 4, 5. excludes the Father from being *Lord* and *Spirit* together with them: And what is

here said of *God the Father* as *over or above all* (*ἐν ὑψίστοις*) is said of *Christ* as *over all* (*ἐν παντί*) *God blessed for ever*, *Rom.* ix. 5.) and as the Father is *through and in all* believers, and all things that refer to them; so it is said of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all things are *by him or through him*, (*διὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ*) *1 Cor.* viii. 6. and that he *sits all in all*, *Eph.* i. 23. and believers are the "temples" of the Holy Ghost, in whom the Spirit "of God dwells," *1 Cor.* iii. 16. Therefore *one God and Father of all* may be considered either as a personal character, and so the meaning is, that there is but one God the Father, in distinction from God the Son and Spirit; or as an *essential* character, and so there is but one true God inclusive of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom we are devoted in our baptism, ver. 5. in opposition to all false gods; and with just the same propriety it may be said there is *one God the Son*, and *one God the Spirit*, to distinguish them personally from the Father, and essentially from all false gods.

all and every part of the mystical body of Christ, to preserve, govern, and supply them; and who, by his spirit and grace, dwells in all of you that believe, as in his temple, and works in every one of you *that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ*, (Heb. xiii. 21.) and therefore ye ought to be of one heart and soul in your acknowledgments, love, and reverence of him, and in your obedience and subjection to him, as your own God and Father; and should love as brethren, and as children, that have one and the same God for your heavenly Father.

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

7 But though we are all members of one Catholic church, and there are so many important things, in which we are agreed, and therefore ought heartily to unite in the bonds of love and peace: yet there are other things, in which, as members of the same body, there is a beautiful difference between us, with respect to spiritual offices and endowments, which all proceed from one and the same Author, and are fully consistent with the most excellent and desirable union, and subservient to the same common end. And that none may be discontented on the one hand, or proud on the other, and none may envy or despise another, Let it be considered, that all the variety of graces, and spiritual gifts and attainments, which, in one degree or other, we are severally favoured with, are given to us, not according to our deserts, but by an act of mere grace, in such measures and proportions, as Christ sees fittest and best to bestow them upon us, not only for the benefit of our own souls, but likewise for the edification of one another, (1 Cor. xii. 7.)

8 Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

8 This appears from a remarkable scripture-prophecy of Christ, where God speaking by *David*, in allusion to the triumphs of conquerors, says, with reference to the Messiah, (*Psal. lxxviii. 18.*) when, after victory obtained over all his enemies, he ascended in grandeur and triumph up to glory, thousands of angels attending him, as his pompous train, he led sin, Satan, the world, and death, as his spoils of war, and captives, in chains; even those very enemies that had taken multitudes captive, and enslaved them\*: And as

#### N O T E.

\* The learned Mr *Price* in an appendix to this verse, p. 74. conjectures, that Christ's leading *captivity captive*, is to be understood of *good angels*: and yet he allows that, if we were to be entirely guided by the etymology, the word there used would relate to persons taken in war; and the instances he alleges from the *New Testament* for a different sense, either allude to war, or a violent *captivity*; or

great when any were brought into captivity with the consent of the captive, it is sometimes taken in a bad, as well as at other, in a good sense; so that his notion rests on a very uncertain foundation; and I do not easily apprehend, how the holy angels can be called a *captivity*, which our Lord led captive. (See also the note on Col. ii. 15.)

great generals and princes use to scatter largesses or donatives among the people, with a liberal hand, in days of public entry, with the spoils of war, into their capital cities, so our Lord Jesus Christ, having *spoiled principalities and powers*, (Col. ii. 15.) distributed the most excellent gifts and graces of his Spirit, with the richest profusion †, among men of all nations upon earth, as free and glorious ascension gifts to them, for whom he, as Mediator and Head of the church, received them of his Father, as the reward of his sufferings and death, that he might give them, even to the most unworthy and rebellious sinners, inclusive of the *Gentiles*, that a reconciled God might place his tabernacle, and take up his gracious abode among them.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

9 Now when it is said that he ascended up on high in such a victorious and triumphant manner, as was fit for none but a God to be honoured with, and as none could have been capable of, but he who was *declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead*, (Rom. i. 4.) what does this intimate to us, but that, as his mediatorial triumph was founded on his obedience unto death; so antecedent, and in order to his glorious exaltation, he descended from heaven to earth in the assumption of the human nature into personal union with himself, and was conceived in the womb of the virgin *Mary*, (Luke i. 30, 31. \*) and, being brought forth, lived in a state of humiliation and sufferings in this lower world, for the satisfaction of divine justice, till at length he was crucified and buried in the grave?

10 He that descended,

10 That Jesus, who in this manner humbled himself

#### N O T E S.

† The gifts here intended most directly refer to those extraordinary ones that were bestowed upon the church in its officers, but may likewise be extended to all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that private members, as well as church officers, whether ordinary or extraordinary, are favoured with: For the allusion is to conquerors throwing their largesses among the common people; and the gifts here meant were received by Christ, as Man and Mediator, in order to his giving them to the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them, as it is expressed, Psa. lxiii. 19. to which this passage refers. Accordingly he ascended that he might fill all things, ver. 10. and the edification of the body of Christ that many might be framed into it, and all its members might derive virtue from him, as their head, seem to be included in

these gifts, as the apostle afterwards explains himself, ver. 12,—16.

\* The lower parts of the earth, is a phrase used in the Old Testament for the womb, Ps. cxix. 15. and for the grave, Ps. lxxiii. 9. and Christ's being buried is called his being in the heart of the earth, Matth. xii. 40. But as his ascending contains every thing that relates to his glorification; so his descending may be considered as including, not only his incarnation and burial, but the whole state of his humiliation upon earth: And as his descending is inferred from his ascending, this goes upon a supposition of his being God, who was originally from above, as he said of himself, John iii. 13. otherwise there is no consequence from his ascending to his descending, since all the saints will ascend to heaven, tho' none of them first descended from thence. Vid. Zanch. in loc.

scended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

self to such an amazing degree, (see *Phil.* ii. 8.) is the very same divine person, that also (after he had conquered all his spiritual enemies) ascended up to the throne of God his Father, to sit down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high in the third heaven, far above the region of the air, and all visible heavens; and he ascended for this important end and purpose, that in virtue of the merit of his death, and of the victory and triumph of his resurrection and ascension, he might fill the whole church; and all its officers and members, and might fill up all its ordinances and administrations with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, by pouring them out abundantly from on high; and so might perfect all things that relate to the further execution of his offices, and to the salvation of the church; and might fulfil all types and prophecies concerning himself, that are not yet accomplished.

22 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

11 And in pursuit of this great and gracious design, he among other of his liberal and free donations, and in subserviance to the rest, furnished the church, first, with extraordinary officers, that were only temporary, as needful in its infant-state and first plantation of the gospel: Of this sort he appointed and ordained some *apostles*, that were to be his chief ministers and special witnesses, as having seen him after his resurrection, and received their commission immediately from himself, and been endowed with privileges peculiar to themselves; such as an ability of fully communicating the whole scheme of the gospel under divine inspiration, and a furniture of powers, not only of working all sorts of miracles, but also of conveying the Holy Ghost to believers by the laying on of their hands. These our blessed Saviour most solemnly confirmed in their office, and eminently qualified for it, by a plentiful effusion of his Spirit after his resurrection and ascension, though he had chosen and sent forth many of them to it before his death. He also gave some *prophets*, that were enabled to explain the Old Testament-prophecies, and foretel things to come by an immediate inspiration; and some *evangelists*, whose office it was to attend and assist the apostles in their travels, and in their work, and to go on their messages, and settle churches in various distant places where the apostles had preached the gospel, but could not stay any length of time to carry on and finish the begun work: And besides these, he in the riches of his love and care appointed ordinary officers, to be of perpetual standing use, as what will be needful to the church thro' all generations to the end of the world: Of these he instituted,

instituted, and endowed with spiritual gifts and graces, some *pastors*, who are also stiled *bishops*, and *elders*, that should be settled in particular churches to take a peculiar care of them, to preside, watch, and rule over them in the Lord, and to administer all the ordinances of worship and discipline, as well as to preach the word to them: And for assistants to these, in like manner as the evangelists were to the apostles, he graciously appointed other *ministers of the gospel at large*, to be employed in various churches and congregations, as occasions might require, though not with full power to perform all the parts of the pastoral office \*.

12 For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, of the edifying of the body of Christ:

12 This wise, holy, and gracious appointment, of these various officers, is suited and designed, and, by the blessing of the Lord upon them, is successful, (*ὑποὶ τοῦ καταρτισμοῦ*) for joining in and completing the number of the saints, and their various gifts and graces, that they may adhere to Christ by faith, and to one another by love; and for uniting and compacting those that are renewed and sanctified, by means of their ministrations, into a regular and orderly society, and setting those members to rights, and reducing them to their proper place, that are, at any time, dislocated by their falls †. He also ordained them to their respective offices, for their faithfully dispensing the word and ordinances with labour and diligence, and for his rendering the work of the gospel-ministry authentic, and effectual to all spiritual and saving purposes: And he gave them for the building up of the mystical body of Christ, the church, in light, faith, love, and joy, and in all holy obedience; as also for making continual additions to them of such as shall be saved. One or other of these officers, as particularly *pastors* and *teachers*, are to be continued in the church, by the institution of Christ, for serving these blessed purposes;

13 Till we all come

13 Till all of us, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, weak or

#### N O T E S.

\* Some think that *pastors* and *teachers* mean the same office; and its not being said *some pastors*, and *some teachers*, just in the same distinctive way, as is used with respect to extraordinary officers, may seem to countenance that thought. But as all teachers are not *pastors*, though all *pastors* are *teachers*, and as all the forementioned officers are distinguished from each other, I rather chuse to understand *pastors* and *teachers*, with the difference between them in the paraphrase.

† The learned *Gratius* would have a trans-

position of these clauses, so as to place the work of the ministry before the perfecting of the saints. But, as far as I see, they may stand with propriety enough in the order in which we find them, according to the sense given in the paraphrase; and this order is extremely beautiful, if we receive Dr Marshall's rendering of the original, which stands thus, "for the fitting out holy persons to the work of the ministry, to the edifying the body of Christ; in Blackwall's Sacred Classics, vol. ii. p. 124.

come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

or strong believers, that are members of this mystical body of Christ, (including those that now do, and hereafter shall believe in successive generations to the end of the world) shall meet, and be cemented together in an entire agreement about the doctrines of faith, and in the sweetest harmony, union and oneness, by means of the same kind of special faith in Christ; and of a clear, affectionate and fiducial knowledge, and (*παρακατα*) approving acknowledgment of the eternal Son of God, as a divine person, and the only Lord and Saviour; and so, by gradually improving in gifts and graces, shall, at length, arrive at a state of compleat manhood in spiritual understanding, vigour, strength and attainments of every valuable kind, even unto the full proportion of that mature age and spiritual stature in Christ, which he designs us for, and which is acquired by derivation from his mediatorial fulness, and makes up the utmost fulness of his mystical body that it is capable of under him as its head, with regard to the perfection of its graces, comfort and holiness in heaven, as well as to the completing of the whole number of the elect:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:

14 That, in this way, we may not continue to be, as some of us too much are, like children in knowledge and understanding, weak in faith, wavering in judgment, taken with every new thing, and easily misled; nor, like a ship without ballast in a tempestuous sea, tossed and tumbled hither and thither (*κλυδωνίζομενοι καὶ περιπνεύμενοι*) or driven about, like flying clouds, by every erroneous doctrine, which may be compared to the wind for instability and force, through the fallacies, sophisms, and crafty doublings of artful and designing men, who act like jugglers in casting a die, (*ὡς τὴν κούβιναν*) by plausible pretences, and subtle methods of cheating and imposing upon us;

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

15 But that, on the contrary, we may sincerely speak of, and plead for the truth of the gospel, with a spirit of love to Christ, to the truth itself, and to the souls of others; and may, like living members of a living head, increase in all light, grace and holiness, and in every part of the new creature, by virtue of our union with him, in conformity to him, and for his honour and glory, who is our only vital head, even Christ himself.

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together,

16 From whom, as from the head and fountain, the whole mystical body, † that is composed of many members

#### N O T E.

† Here is a manifest allusion to the human body, which is composed of different joints and members, knit together by various ligaments, and furnished with nerves, tendons.

ther, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

bers, which are duly and orderly adapted one to another, and cemented together, like joint to joint, and all of which are united to Christ, the head, by that energy which is communicated from him through every ordinance and officer of the church, and through every private member in its place and sphere of action, according to the efficacious operation of his Spirit: which being exerted in the proportion that is suited to the state, condition and exigence of every part, produces an improvement of the whole body of Christ, unto the building of it up in all the love, which every member ought to have, and by which it affectionately acts towards him and one another, and toward the whole church, till it be perfected in the heavenly world.

17 Since therefore ye, as members of Christ, are partakers of such privileges, and advantages, as have been but now recited, (*ver. 11,—16.*) I must again, as, in effect, I did before, (*ver. 1.*) earnestly intreat you, and solemnly injoin it upon you, in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, who is witness of what I say, that from this time forward ye no more live and act like other *Gentiles*, who still remain in an unconverted state; but that ye utterly abandon their sinful, sensual, worldly and idolatrous courses, which are all empty, unprofitable and deceitful, and which they go into through the vain and foolish conceit, turn and temper of their own depraved minds.

18 For the noblest faculty and power of their souls, even their understanding, in all its thoughts and reasonings about spiritual things, is overspread with a thick mist of ignorance and error; and their wills and affections, as well as their minds, are quite strangers and averse to the way of life, holiness and happiness, which God has appointed, and to that sort of life itself, which he requires, and approves, and is the author of; by which he lives in the soul, and it lives to him; and which consists in a holy communion with him, and conformity to him. Their understanding is darkened through the innate and wilful ignorance, that is indulged, increased and confirmed in them, relating to what they might, and ought to have known of God, even by the light of nature\*, (*Rom. i. 19, 20, 21.*)

And

#### NOTES.

and other vessels of communication from the head to every part of the body, which, by these means, is nourished, actuated, and invigorated, and arrives to its full strength and stature

(*δια τῶν ὀργάνων*) seems most directly to answer to their having the *understanding darkened*: And *because of the blindness*, or rather *through the hardness* of their heart (*δια τῆς σκληροῦς*) answers to their being *alienated from the life of God*, and so the latter part of

\* Through the ignorance that is in them,

And they are alienated from the life of God, not merely for want of proper inducements to seek after it; but through a chosen and customary, as well as natural stupidity, perverseness and hardness of their own carnal hearts; whereby they resist and stifle the best sentiments of their own minds and consciences, as *not liking to retain God in their knowledge*, (Rom. i. 28.)

19 Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

19 Who through their contracted habit of ignorance, error and hardness of heart, and through the righteous judgment of God in giving them up to their own sin and choice, (Rom. i. 28.) have no uneasy painful reflections upon their multiplied and gross iniquities; but are become quite insensible of, and unaffected with, what they know concerning the judgment of God, *that they which commit such things are worthy of death*, (Rom. i. 32.) their consciences being *seared as with a hot iron*, (1 Tim. iv. 2.) and so they have voluntarily, and with full consent, delivered themselves up to all manner of abominable filthiness in their affections and conversations, unto the practising of the most shameful impurities, and *that with the greatest thirst and eagerness in their thoughts about them, and in their desires and pursuits after them, as if their highest happiness, gain and enjoyment lay in them.* (See Rom. i. 24,—32.) This is the hateful and deplorable case of the unconverted *Gentiles*; and gives the true picture, and an affecting view of what ye yourselves once were, and of what all mankind by nature are, or would be, as left to the power of their own corrupt hearts, (Chap. ii. 3.)

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

20 But as for you, my brethren, who are brought out of darkness into marvellous light, ye have not thus learned the doctrines of Christ, relating to his person, offices and design, nor the obligations ye are under to him, and the privileges ye have received from him, which are all pure and holy; ye have not learned any thing from Christ, that could induce you, or so much as give you leave to allow yourselves in, or venture upon such licentious practices as these\*; no, your very souls must needs have the utmost abhorrence of them, and your lives be prevallyingly free from them;

21 If so be that ye

21 If (as ye profess, and I as am persuaded of you †,) ye

#### N O T E.

the verse distinctly assigns the immediate causes of the two evils respectively, that are mentioned in the former part of it.

\* These words, *ye have not so learned Christ*, admit of two ways of rendering them, which amount, in effect, to the same sense. One is as we have it in our translation; and the other is, *but not so ye; ye have*

*learned Christ*; intimating that their knowledge of him would not suffer them to go into the forementioned immoral courses.

† The apostle explains what sort of *learning Christ* he meant, viz. not merely that which is *external* by the word, but likewise that which is *internal* and effectual by his Spirit; accordingly the particle *if so be* (αὐτοῖς) may



ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

ye have indeed understood, hearkened to, believed and obeyed *from the heart, that form of doctrine*, (Rom. vi. 17.) which ye have heard from Christ, and concerning him by his servants; and if ye have not only heard by the hearing of the ear, but have also been internally and savingly enlightened, and taught by his Spirit heartily to receive the truth of the gospel in its simplicity and purity, according to its genuine tendency and design, as it was delivered by the Lord Jesus himself, and afterwards by his inspired apostles, and was exemplified in his temper and conduct, and is practised by all those, who, as living members of his mystical body, are united to him. What ye have hereby been taught, and influenced, as well as obliged to, is;

21 That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts;

22 That ye labour by his grace, and in the use of all proper and appointed means, yet more and more, and even entirely, to discard and abandon the old man, the body of sin, (Rom. vi. 6. see the paraphrase there,) which discovered itself in your former wicked practices through all the days of your unregeneracy; and to throw it aside with abhorrence, as ye would an old filthy garment, that is no longer fit to be worn, it being in itself the most debasing evil, that corrupts all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body, and tends unto, and, unless cured by renewing grace, would certainly issue in eternal destruction, according to the workings of its impetuous and unlawful appetites and inclinations, which deceive carnal hearts with false appearances of profit, honour, or pleasure; and by specious assurances betray them into unexpected shame and misery.

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind:

23 And this saving knowledge of Christ excites and binds you, not only to mortify your corruptions, but also to abound in all grace and holiness, that ye may press after a still further renovation\*, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, in the inmost powers of the soul, which is of a spiritual nature, but is all over depraved by the fall; and particularly after a growing renovation in your understanding, that superi-

or

#### N O T E S.

may be considered as putting the supposition for argument's sake; or else, as what he took for granted was really the case of these *Ephesians*: And tho' this form of expression might be designed to awaken a serious inquiry in their minds, whether they were in truth what they professed to be; yet it seems to be used here as a particle of *affirming*, rather than of *doubting*, and so signifies *in as much as*, or *seeing that ye have heard*, &c. (See the note on chap. iii. 2.)

\* As the apostle supposed that these *Ephesians* had learned Christ, and been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, ver. 20, 21. he could not but look upon them, in the judgment of charity, as already regenerated, or born again; and therefore *renewing in the spirit of their mind*, must relate, not to the first work of the Spirit in their conversion, but to a progressiveness in those holy principles and dispositions that were wrought in them by heart-changing grace.

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

or and leading faculty, as well as in your will and affections, which are, or ought to be under its conduct.

24 And a further end of your learning Christ is, that instead of wearing the deformity of the old man any longer, by giving way to sin, ye may, by daily and increasing exercises of grace, dress and adorn yourselves, (1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.) with all the beauties of the new creature, which is formed in the whole man, when *old things are past away, and all things become new*, (2 Cor. v. 17.) and which may be called *the new man*, because of its excellent qualities, and its being lately begotten in the soul, after sin had continued in long possession there; and because it is *not corruptible*, as the old man is, (1 Pet. iii. 4.) And this new man is God's own *workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, (Eph. ii. 10.) and is produced by his infinite wisdom, power and grace, according to his holy will, and after his own image, in which he at first created man, (Gen. i. 27.) and which consists in divine principles and dispositions, habits and acts of justice and honesty towards our fellow-creatures, and of purity and piety toward God: and all this holiness is real, internal and effectual, in opposition to hypocrisy, and to the external and ceremonial purifications of the *Mosaic-law*, and is attended with the knowledge of the truth, which is another part of the image of God, (Col. iii. 10.)

25 Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.

25 Therefore, according to these advantages and obligations, take heed of all those sins which ye formerly have been addicted to, but which are directly contrary to your Christian character; as for instance, see to it, that ye banish falsehood and lies, deceit and frauds of every kind, to the remotest distance from your designs and conversation, as the most detestable sins, that sap the foundation of all good morality itself, and are utterly unworthy of the man, and much more of the Christian: and, as God commanded *Israel*, (Zech. viii. 16.) let every one of you sincerely make conscience of, and pay a strict regard to truth, at all times, in every circumstance, and in every thing that he says and does to others, whatever temptations he may have, and whatever any of the heathens may teach or practise, to the contrary\*. For we who believe in Christ, are as much members of *civil society* as ever; and therefore ought to be true and faithful to all mankind, as having a joint-interest and concernment in the welfare of the whole;

#### N O T E.

\* It appears from several *besieben-writers*, that they thought it lawful to tell a lie, when it might be profitable for them; and that, in

such cases, it was better than a hurtful truth. (See various testimonies to this purpose in Dr Whitby's note on this verse.)

whole ; as we are members of the same *spiritual* body, of which Christ is the head ; and therefore ought, in a special manner, to avoid deceit, and speak the truth to our fellow-Christians, that we may not injure, but be helpful to one another, as members of the natural body use to be.

26 Be ye angry and sin not : let not the sun go down upon your wrath :

26 Watch over your passions, that they may be kept under due government ; and as anger is apt to get the ascendancy, upon every little provocation, labour to regulate and restrain it †, that it may not become sinful, either by your being angry, without a cause, or to answer some bad end ; or by letting it rise to excess, and degenerate into fury, rage and revenge, even when there may be just occasion for a holy resentment : and if at any time it throws you into a wrathful, discomposing perturbation of spirit, which is in itself sinful, be as speedy as possible, in looking up for divine assistance ; and endeavouring to suppress it, and to be reconciled to your brother, according to our Lord's own direction, (*Mat. v. 23, 24.* \*) that it may not rest in your bosoms, like the anger of fools, (*Ecc. vii. 9.*) and may by no means remain with you till sun-set, to distract your minds, and unfit them for evening-prayer, which ought to be *without wrath and doubting*, (1 Tim. ii. 8.) nor may lye down with you to disturb your sleep in the night, nor rise with you the following day.

27 Neither give place to the devil.

27 'Tis the work of your great adversary, the devil, to irritate and inflame, and keep up turbulent and revengeful passions, to your own and others hurt ; as ever therefore ye would not suffer Satan to have a place in your hearts : nor would gratify him, nor give him an advantage against you, by yielding to his malicious and destructive designs ; nor would be hurried, thro' his insigations, into still greater sin and mischief in word or deed, stand upon your guard against his temptations whenever you find your spirits heated ; and resist him stedfastly in the faith, who watches all occasions

#### N O T E S.

† Be ye angry is not to be taken as an *excitation* to anger, which, alas ! we are naturally too prone to of ourselves : and yet it intimates, that all anger in its own nature is not sinful : but may be allowable upon just occasions, as it is in itself an innocent passion, planted in the original frame of human nature to be exercised in a proper and decent manner ; and was so by the blessed and holy Jesus himself. (*Mark iii. 5.*)

\* Let not the sun go down upon your wrath seems to be a sort of proverbial expression, to signify things that ought to be done without

delay, in allusion to the law of God, which ordered the criminal, that was hanged upon a tree, to be buried the same day, and the hire of a poor servant not to be kept back till the sun should go down upon it, *Deut. xxi. 23, 23.* and *xxiv. 14, 15.* And even *Pythagoras*, a heathen philosopher, enjoined his disciples, that after any quarrel, or contentious behaviour through anger, they should shake hands and become friends again, before the sun went down. (See Dr Hammond's note here.)

sions to ensnare you, and *and walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*, (1 Pet. v. 8, 9. \*) and take heed of giving ear to false accusers and slanderers of your neighbours, who, as Satan's instruments, would incense you against others without any just ground; and so would put you upon such unjustifiable expressions of undue anger, as might give occasion to heathens and unbelievers of reviling your holy profession of Christ and his gospel.

28 Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

28 And if there be any among you, who, before he was brought to the knowledge of Christ, had accustomed himself, and thought there was no great harm in it, as some of the heathens do†, to pilfer, wrong and cheat his neighbour in a clandestine manner, to supply his own wants, or maintain himself in idleness; or if, even since his conversion, he retains light thoughts of this sin, and continues to be still addicted to it, let such an one henceforth show that he has so learned Christ, as utterly to abhor and abandon these unrighteous and injurious practices, which are not only inconsistent with all the institutions of Christianity; but are destructive of personal property, and direct violations of the moral law, and the common rights of mankind: but, on the contrary, let him think it his duty, and make it his care and practice, to lead an honest and useful life of labour and service, according to the station and employment to which God, in his providence, has called him; and if his circumstances and calling be of such a nature, as require earning his daily bread with the sweat of his brow, (*Gen. iii. 19.*) by any handicraft trade or other lawful and commendable, though laborious business, let him apply to it with industry and pains-taking, that, by the blessing of God on his honest endeavours, he may not only get enough for his own and family's subsistence, if he has one, and may be under no temptations to defraud others; but may also have something to spare, on proper occasions, for relieving the necessities of the poor, and especially of such as are of the household of faith, that they may not be tempted to steal, as he himself formerly was; and that he may be a blessing, and no longer a nuisance and burden, to civil, or religious communities.

29 Fur-

#### N O T E S.

\* As (*διαβολος*) the word here rendered the devil signifies any false accuser, I have, with the Syriac version, Erasmus, and others, taken that sense into the paraphrase.

† Stealing properly signifies private thefts and frauds, in distinction from public or violent robbery; and as in many of the Gen-

tile-nations theft was thought to be no sin; so, perhaps, some of the Ephesian converts had not quite divested themselves of their own immoral notions about it, nor consequently got thoroughly off from their former habitual inclinations to it.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

29 Furthermore, as to your words, as well as your temper and actions, carefully avoid all light and frothy, and especially all profane, indecent, obscene and opprobrious language, that proceeds from a corrupt heart, and has a dangerous tendency to corrupt the minds and manners of them that hear it, (1 Cor. xv. 33.); let nothing of this kind ever, like stinking and infectious breath, go forth out of your mouth; but, on the other hand, let it be always with grace, as if it were seasoned with salt, even such as is under the conduct of a gracious spirit: and is wise and prudent, opportune and suitable to persons, times and places, and to the circumstances and occasions that are before you; and is adapted, in a way of counsel, caution, reproof, or consolation, to promote the spiritual benefit of the company you converse with, that it may be a means of recommending religion to the hearers, of favourizing their spirits and giving them a good turn, of communicating some useful instruction to them, and of helping forward the work of grace in their hearts.

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

30 And as all the things which I have been cautioning you against are directly contrary to the holy nature, will and operations, gifts and graces of the good Spirit of God; and as he (speaking after the manner of men) is grieved at them, as a friend uses to be at the disagreeable and ungrateful behaviour of one that he dwells with, and has treated with kindness and favour, have a care, least by indulging any of them ye offend and rebel against him, as *Israel* did of old, (*Isaiah* lxiii. 10.) and provoke him to withdraw his gracious presence, and deprive you of his comforts, who is not only infinitely pure and holy in himself, but loves holiness, and is the author and worker of its first beginnings, and of all its increases in you; by which, in some remarkable manifestations and impressions of light and grace, consequent to your first believing, (see the note and paraphrase on *chap. i. 13.*) ye are evidently sealed as with his own image, and are thereby distinguished for his own, with assuring tokens of salvation; and have the pledge and earnest of it in yourselves, for your present security and comfort, until ye be possessed of the heavenly inheritance, (*chap. i. 14.*) at death, when your souls shall be compleatly delivered from all the evils ye feel or fear; and at the day of judgment, when your bodies shall be redeemed from the power of the grave to a glorious immortality, that they may share with your souls in the eternal happiness, which shall be

fully revealed at the final manifestation of the sons of God. (*Rom. viii. 19, 23.*)

30 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

31 This Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of love and peace; and therefore as ever ye would not grieve him, and lose his comfortable and sealing presence, take special heed that all rancour, severity and sourness of temper; and all furious, raging and ungovernable passions; and all causeless and excessive anger, (see the note on *ver. 26.*) and all loud threatening and scolding, noisy quarrels and contentions; and all railings, defamations and backbitings, under the power of a boisterous and tumultuous mind, either to the reviling of men, or to the dishonouring of the name of God, which may be called a sort of blasphemy (*βλασφημία*); See that all this be laid aside, discountenanced and removed to the farthest distance from you, together with all malicious, spiteful, envious and injurious thoughts, or heart-burnings: Let all these sorts of evil be resisted and banished, as highly displeasing to the good Spirit of God, and repugnant to his free and friendly communion with you.

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

32 On the contrary, as ever ye would hope for his sweet and satisfying abode with you, labour, under the influence, and according to the mind and will of this divine Spirit, to cultivate an affectionate, affable and benevolent disposition and behaviour, as persons that take pleasure in doing all offices of kindness and friendship one towards another †; sympathize with, and shew all tenderness, pity and bowels of mercy, (*Col. iii. 12.*) toward the weak, afflicted and discouraged; and if any of your brethren affront or injure you, do not grow hard-hearted toward them, nor seek a retaliation, or owe them a grudge for it; but frankly and freely forget and forgive, and entirely pass it by, in consideration, and imitation, of the infinitely greater forgiveness of the manifold and aggravated transgressions, which God in the riches of his grace has extended to you; and *that* not at so cheap a rate as ye are called to forgive your brethren, which will cost you nothing; but on account of the death and sufferings of his own dear Son Jesus Christ whom he of his mere favour appointed, provided, gave and sent to make an atonement by his precious blood for *them*, as well as for yourselves, that he might freely, fully and honourably forgive both them and you.

#### N O T E.

† One another (*ἑαυτοῖς*) is put for *ἑαυτοῖς* here, and *chap. v. 19.* *Col. iii. 16.* and seems to be so *Jude, ver. 20, 21,* and perhaps, *Phil. ii. 12.*

## R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How amiable is a holy conversation, answerable to the nature and design of that happy state, into which God calls his people by his grace ! Nothing can be a greater credit to it, than to be of an humble, meek, calm and patient temper, bearing with and forbearing our fellow-Christians in love, and studiously pursuing, as with one heart and soul, the things that make for mutual harmony and peace. How great are the obligations to Christian-love and unity among true believers of every denomination ! They are all members of the same mystical body of Christ ; animated by one and the same Holy Spirit ; partakers of one hope, of the heavenly inheritance ; related to and interested in one Lord and Saviour ; agreed in the same fundamental doctrines of faith, under the same baptismal engagements ; and have all one and the same covenant-God and Father, who is infinitely above them all, and dwells in them all by his Spirit. And what may we not hope for from the exalted Redeemer ! He, who, by divine dispensation, descended from heaven to the deepest humiliation and sufferings on earth, is now ascended to the heaven of heavens, as a triumphant conqueror over all his and our enemies. And with what bounteous favour does he scatter his ascension-gifts among the children of men ! He lives and reigns in all his glory, to fill his church and every member of it with various gifts and graces. And what ample care has he taken of them in the institution of a gospel-ministry ! He gave and furnished out apostles, prophets, and evangelists, as long as occasions required such extraordinary and inspired officers ; and he appoints and qualifies pastors and teachers, as ordinary officers, to continue to the end of the world, that, by means of their ministrations he may carry on the design of his kingdom and grace, and the good of his people through all generations. How important then is the work of the ministry ! 'Tis for filling up the church with converts, and bringing them into gospel-order ; and for edifying all its members in knowledge, faith and love, and every other grace, and establishing their minds and hearts, that they may be guarded against the artifices of subtle deceivers, and not fluctuate, like children, between truth and error ; but may grow up in all things into Christ, who is their head, and may derive all supplies from him, till they attain the compleat stature of manhood in him. But what a deplorable state of ignorance, sin and ruin are we in, 'till grace makes a holy and happy change upon us, by means of the gospel ! Our understandings are darkened through wilful ignorance, and we are strangers and averse to the divine life, through the obstinacy of our own perverse hearts. How should we dread adding sin to sin, lest we provoke the just and holy God to leave us to ourselves, till we become utterly insensible of our guilt and danger, and run into all iniquity with greediness ! But the true knowledge of Christ has a quite contrary tendency and effect ; and if we know him, and the truth as 'tis in him, under the light and influence of his Spirit, it will effectually restrain us from all known iniquity. How odious is *the old man*, the body of sin ; and how resolutely should believers set themselves against it ! 'Tis abominable, corrupt, and deceiving in its various lulls, as appears from the conversation of unregenerate sinners ; it perverts and inflames their passions, and fills them with bitter anger, wrath and malice ; it carries them into deceit and lying, idleness, frauds and thefts ; renders their discourse unsavoury and defiling, clamorous and injurious to their neighbours ; and is a gratification of the devil, and an offence to the Holy Spirit of God. But how excellent is the *New Man*, which believers are clothed with, as with a beautiful garment ! 'Tis a renewal of the spirit of our minds, and a new creation, according to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness ; it subdues our wrathful passions, and will by no means suffer them to rest in our bosom, but gives them a softening turn into all kindness, tenderness and forgiveness of offences ; it makes us honest, upright and faithful in all our dealings, and industrious in the business of life, to which God calls us ; it brings our lips under the law of truth, and renders our converses good and edifying. And how should Christians be excited to such a temper and conduct, that they may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption ; but may act according to the endearing obligations of the superlative love of God, who for Christ's sake forgives them all trespasses !

## C H A P. V.

The apostle concludes his exhortation to brotherly love, 1, 2. Repeats his caution against several sins, as particularly against all uncleanness, covetousness and drunkenness, with a variety of arguments to enforce the caution, and direct to a contrary behaviour, 3,—20. And exhorts to the relative duties of society in general, 21. And of wives and husbands in particular, which are illustrated and enforced by the spiritual relation that is between Christ and the church, 22,—33.

## TEXT.

BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

## PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore † God is so exceedingly good and merciful, in the exercise of his pardoning grace toward you, (*ch. iv. 32.*) let this excite you to be (*imitators*) imitators of him, in exercising all kindness and forgiveness one towards another, as becomes children of his own likeness, begotten as well as adopted by him, beloved of him and loving him, and delighting to resemble him, especially in those amiable graces, and to approve yourselves to him, who is love, and is so much pleased with this part of his image, that he who dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. (1 John iv. 16.)

2 And as the example of your heavenly Father should induce and animate you to this noble duty; so should the example of Christ, that your whole conversation, all your lives long even unto death, may be friendly and affectionate one towards another, from a principle of love to God and Christ, without distinction of parties, on account of some being *Jewish* and others *Gentile* converts; even as Christ himself has with superlative condescension and grace first loved one, as well as another of us, who believe in him; and has given the most affecting and astonishing proof of it, in his freely becoming our substitute, and yielding up his great and infinite self to the most terrible death for us, as an expiatory sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and make atonement for our sins, when *through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God.* (Heb. ix. 14.) This was so highly pleasing and acceptable in his sight, as may be called an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, in allusion to the typical burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, to make atonement, (*Gen. viii. 20, 21. and Lev. iv. 31.*) which are now fulfilled,

with

## N O T E.

† This, as is intimated by the particle *therefore*, is an inference from the last verse of the preceding chapter, which might have

been better continued to the end of the second verse of this chapter, where the apostle shuts up his argument then in hand.



with the richest advantage and efficacy, in the sacrifice of Christ.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness; let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints;

2 But, to return, there are several other sins, besides those afore-mentioned, (*chap. iv. 25, &c.*) that are practised among the heathens, and too much in vogue at *Ephesus*, which I would further caution you against; as particularly against the sin of whoredom between persons of contrary sexes, whether in the single or married life, (see the note on *1 Cor. v. 1.*) and against all manner of indecency, immodesty, and lewdness in gesture, looks, dress, and actions, that betray an unchaste disposition of heart, and have a tendency to excite the like in others; or, to carry the matter still further, I would caution you against irregular and immodest desires after forbidden objects, and an inordinate love to, and pursuit after the things of this world, that would put you upon gaining them by dishonourable and unjust means; or would make you discontented without them, and unwilling, when ye have them, to use and part with them for the glory of God, and the good of others: Let it never be said that any of you are guilty of either of these vices; no, nor let them be so much as mentioned among you without the utmost detestation, as ever ye would behave like Christians that are indeed renewed and sanctified, and ought to be chaste and pure in body and mind, and devoted to God, according to your holy profession, as saints.

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

4 Nor let there be among you any shameful practices in secret, the very naming of which would put a modest person to the blush; nor any light, wanton, or obscene ways of talking, bantering, or joking, which are so far from innocent pleasantry, and lawful jests, that they are not only unprofitable and vain, but very offensive to God, and unfufferable to a chaste ear, and are too great an incentive to impure thoughts and actions: Ye therefore ought to have nothing to do with them; but, on the contrary, should accustom yourselves to employ your tongue in speaking well of God, with grateful acknowledgments of his goodness, and in thankfulness and praise for his wondrous works of providence and grace, which would be honourable to him, and improving to your company, as well as to yourselves; and would be a happy means of guarding you against impure language, and all the forementioned abominable iniquities, which are of the most pernicious consequence.

5 For this ye know, that no man

5 For since ye have learned Christ, (*chap. iv. 20, 21.*) ye cannot but know, and ye ought seriously to reflect

whore-monger, nor unclean person, nor envious man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.

upon it, that, according to the holy nature and design of the Christian religion, no person whatsoever, who is addicted to, and lives and allows himself in the practice of whoredom; nor any other who indulges to any sort of impure affections, and lascivious actions; nor any worldly-minded covetous wretch, who makes mammon his God, and is, by just construction, an idolater, as he is supremely fond of earthly treasures, and rates his happiness by them, and sets them up in his heart in the room of God, and makes an idol of his riches, or other worldly enjoyments, like one entirely devoted to them; No such person, whatsoever his profession or pretences be, while he remains impenitent and persists in either of these sins, has any right or claim to, or, living and dying in that state, shall ever have any lot or portion in that pure, incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of all blessedness, honour, and delight, (1 Pet. i. 4.) which consists in the enjoyment of God, and of Christ, who is one God with the Father †; and which pertains to the subjects of the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter, which Christ, in a way of purchase, and God the Father in a way of free gift, on his account, has prepared to be the inheritance of the saints in light, (Col. i. 12. and see Rev. xxi. 27.)

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

6 Take heed that no one, either through the subtilties of *Gentile* philosophy, or through *Jewish* false glosses on the law of God, or through importunity, or any artful management, impose upon and delude you by plausible, though empty and fallacious ways of talking about these crimes, as if there were not that evil in them which I have reminded you of; and ye well know to be true, (ver. 5.) or as if ye might go on in them with impunity, and without danger: for, whatever they may pretend, 'tis certain that these are such abominable iniquities, as not only exclude the practitioners of them from the kingdom of heaven; but likewise provoke and bring down the wrath of God in awful instances here, and for ever in full vials hereafter, like rushing cataracts upon rebellious sinners, who, as sons of unbelief and disobedience, (*παιδείας*) a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith, (Deut. xxxii. 20.) obstinately persist in them, not only in direct

#### N O T E.

† Christ is here distinguished, as *Mediator*, from God the Father, according to our version of the words *the kingdom of Christ and of God*. But as the kingdom is one, and is said to be equally the kingdom both of Christ and of God, this (as *Zanchy* observes) intimates, that he is one and the same God with

the Father, as well as that there is no admission into the kingdom of God but by Christ. And *Beza* notes that there is but one article prefix'd to Christ and God, (*τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ Θεῷ*) and so it might be render'd *the kingdom of Christ, even of God*, or *the kingdom of Christ, who is God*.

rect contradiction to the gospel, but even to the *moral law* itself.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

7 Stand therefore upon your guard; and beg assistance from above, that ye may never be the partners and companions of such abandoned creatures, nor ever countenance them in their evil courses, much less conform to them; lest ye also be partakers of their plagues, which, by the just judgment of God, will be inflicted upon them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light,

8 For ye were indeed formerly, during your *Gentilism* and unconverted state, as blind as others; as ignorant and dark in your minds with regard to the true knowledge of God, and of spiritual and holy things, as darkness itself; and ye then walked in the ways of sin, which were all darkness, (1 John i. 6. and ii. 9.) and in which a man *knoweth not whither he goes*, (John xii. 35. and 1 John ii. 11.) and therefore 'tis no wonder that ye then went on in the high road to destruction †. But now, upon your believing in Christ and embracing the gospel, the case is happily altered with you: a divine and spiritual light hath shone into, and filled your minds, to give you a discerning of the truth as it is in Jesus; and divine grace has wrought your hearts and lives into a conformity to that truth, (*chap. iv. 20, 21.*) Ye have all light and purity in the Lord, as your head of wisdom and influence; and ye have the light of knowledge and of grace by derivation from him, and by the influence of his Spirit, (*ver. 19.*) as ye are united to him; and so your former sinful ways are utterly unbecoming your present state and character. 'Tis therefore both your duty and privilege to live and act, with perseverance and daily advances, in all your walk before God, like children of light, that are brought under a new direction, and into a new sphere of holy action, and take pleasure in it, as is suitable to those that are enlightened by the word and Spirit of Christ, and have the best assistances for behaving accordingly.

9 For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and right-

9 For the true and genuine fruit, which is produced, cherished, and perfected by the light and influence of

#### N O T E.

† At *darkness* and *light* are used in scripture to signify *sin* and *holiness*, as well as *error* and *truth*, or *ignorance* and *knowledge*, which is the light that makes manifest, *ver. 13.* both senses are included in the paraphrase, as being adapted to represent the former and the present state of the *Ephesians*, and the nature and design of the argument in hand. Accordingly the *children of light*

stand opposed in this verse to the *children of disobedience*, *ver. 6.* and both are *Hebraisms*, to signify persons that are under the power of darkness and disobedience, as tho' they were *born of them* respectively; and that are addicted and affected toward them, and take pleasure in them, as children naturally do in their parents.

righteousness and truth,)

of the Spirit of the Lord, is all holy \*. It consists of every thing that is good and excellent in its own nature, and beneficial to others, as well as yourselves, in opposition to covetousness, (*ver. 3.*) which is evil in itself, as 'tis practical idolatry, (*ver. 5.*) and turns to no good, but very bad account, as it is a *with-holding more than is meet, and tends to poverty*, (*Prov. xi. 24.*) The fruit of the Spirit also consists of every thing that is right, and just, and due, in all your behaviour toward God and man; and includes all purity of heart and life, in opposition to all uncleanness, (*ver. 3, 4, 5.*) whereby we defile ourselves, and are injurious to others; and it consists of an adherence to the light and truth of the gospel, which has irradiated your minds, in opposition to ignorance and error, in which ye formerly were involved, as in the thickest darkness, (*ver. 8.*) and consists of all integrity and faithfulness in whatsoever ye say or do, in opposition to lying and falshood, which I have also cautioned you against, (*ch. iv. 25.*) Ye therefore being partakers of these excellent fruits of the Spirit, your conversation ought to be always of a piece answerable to them, like those that live and walk in the light \*. (*ver. 8.*)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

10 Ye ought by the assistance, and in the light of the Spirit, to try and prove what is the mind and will of God in his word, that ye may know, and be satisfied about what is pleasing to him, and may heartily approve of it and be conformed to it; and that ye may exhibit a fair view of it in your walk, and give proof to others of your conscientious regard to it; and may approve yourselves to the Lord Christ, and to the Father through him, in performing the acceptable and perfect will of God, which is your reasonable service, (*Rom. xii. 1, 2.*)

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

11 And that ye may walk as becomes the children of light, have no manner of partnership with, nor give the least countenance or encouragement to iniquitous practices of any kind whatsoever, which are *unfruitful works*, as they are not only unprofitable, but exceedingly injurious, (*Rom. vi. 21.*) and are so very shameful, that they also may well be called *works of darkness*, as they are committed only by persons of dark and ignorant minds, and will not bear the light of a strict scrutiny of conscience, much less the light of God's word and

#### N O T E.

\* This verse is brought in, by way of parenthesis; with such a description of the fruits of the Spirit as falls in with the apostle's main design of enforcing his exhorta-

tion to walk in the light; and then he returns to shew how that walk is to be pursued in the 10th verse, which stands connected with the 8th.

and of a future judgment, to bring them to the test of truth and righteousness; and as they are often committed in the darkness of the night, or of privacy to hide them from open view, and finally lead to *the blackness of darkness for ever, which is reserved unto the ungodly*, (Jude, ver. 13.) But instead of going into, or being any way accessory to these evil practices, let it be your concern and endeavour, as becomes those that are *light in the Lord*, to *rebuke your brother, and not suffer sin upon him*; to shew him, in the most convincing manner, how wicked and dangerous the works of darkness are, that he may be ashamed of them; and to put a check upon them by friendly, kind, and prudent admonitions of those that are guilty of them; and especially by your own circumspect and exemplary conversation in the shining beauties of holiness, which will expose their deformity in their own proper colours, and will carry a practical and most inoffensive and unexceptionable, though touching confutation, reproof and condemnation of all contrary courses, as sinful and provoking to God, and unsuitable to the holy profession of his name.

11 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

12 For it would be a reproach upon a Christian's character, and would even shock a religious, sober, and modest mind, so much as to mention some vile and detestable things †, unless in a way of necessary reproof for them, that are committed by persons of corrupt minds, with the greatest secrecy and in the dark, as being themselves ashamed of having them known to others, lest they should expose their own characters; not considering that God sees them, how much soever they may be concealed from the eyes of men; and that he will bring them to light, and take severe vengeance for them in the day of judgment, (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

13 But ye, who are now light in the Lord, (ver. 8.) are by this means enabled to judge of, and condemn the deformity and mischief of all these sinful practices, that are too vile to bear the light, and are reprov'd by the light of God's word and Spirit, and of your good conversation in Christ: for as whatsoever renders objects visible, in their true state, is light; so that which has discovered to you the odiousness, guilt, and danger of these shameful immoralities, and given you a view

#### N O T E.

† Some think that by the things *done in secret* the apostle refers to the shocking, abominable, and filthy practices that the heathens were guilty of in the secret acts of their idolatrous worship, and that were not to be

divulged to others: But, be that as it will, they are evidently to be understood, in a wider extent, for all unfruitful works of darkness spoken of in the foregoing verse.

view of them in their own hideous colours, to make you renounce, abhor, and condemn them, is light indeed; 'tis the light and knowledge of Christ and of his word, which has shone in your hearts, and makes you shine as lights in the world, that by your good counsel, and good works, ye may convince wicked men, and shame them out of their deeds of darkness, which they did not see the evil of before. This is the excellent light that ye are brought into, and are called to walk in.

14. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

14 Therefore, to shew that ye, even the *Gentiles* among you, are now brought into this happy state; † as our blessed Lord, in raising the dead, said to a *young woman*, and to a *young man*, *Arise*, (Mark v. 41. and Luke vii. 14.) and to *Lazarus*, *Come forth*, (John xi. 43.) so God says in the current of the Old Testament-prophecies about his calling the *Gentiles*, with a design of exerting divine energy with his call to make it effectual; Awake out of your state of ignorance, stupidity, and insensibility; and rise up from the death in trespasses and sins, in which you have hitherto lain, but from which I will quicken you by an almighty power attending my word of command; and Christ, *who is a light to the Gentiles, and my salvation to the ends of the earth*, (Is. xlix. 6.) shall enlighten you with spiritual wisdom and understanding, to shew you the way to eternal life; and shall give you the comfort of both the light

#### N O T E.

† Various are the conjectures of expositors about the connection of these words, whether it should be with ver. 8. or ver. 11. or with the next preceding verse; and about what is meant by *he* says, whether it refers to Christ's speaking by the apostle, as he did by the ancient prophets, who often introduced their messages with a *thus saith the Lord*, and with intimations that he spake by them; or whether it refers to any particular passage in the Old Testament or in the apocryphal writings, or to the general doctrine of the Old Testament-prophecies, relating to the calling of the *Gentiles*. And they are much divided in their sentiments about the difference that may be supposed between *awaking out of sleep*, and *rising from the dead*, whether the first of these phrases may, or may not relate to *slumbering believers*, and the second to *unregenerate sinners*. But amidst all the difficulty of adjusting these things, what appears to me to be most easy and natural is, that the connection stands with the next preceding verse, which speaks of *lights*, as that which *makes manifest*; and so this verse is brought in to shew that the *Ephesians* though *Gentiles*, were, according to ancient prophecies, partakers of a spiritual light: And *he* says seems

to relate to the sum, or general current of what God had said in prophecy about the conversion of the *Gentiles*, as particularly in Is. vi. 1, 2, 3. and ix. 2. and xlix. 6. But there is no particular passage in any of the prophets, no, nor in any apocryphal book, as far as I find, that answers to this quotation; and the stile, *he* says, I think is never used by the apostle to signify what God, or Christ, or the Spirit said by him. As to *awaking out of sleep*, and *rising from the dead*, I take them to be terms of much the same import, since death is frequently represented under the image of *sleep*, and is called *the sleep of death*, (Ps. xiii. 3.) accordingly we often read of persons *sleeping with their fathers*; and *awaking out of this sleep* is the very same thing with *rising from the dead*, as in 2 Kings iv. 31. Dan. xii. 2. and John xi. 11. And both these expressions, if we consider them as what God said by the prophets, with respect to the calling of the *Gentiles*, relate to their state and condition, not after they were called by grace, but before, to bring them out of that deplorable state; in which, and never afterward, they were said to be *dead in trespasses, and sins*. (Chap. ii. 1.)

light of knowledge, and of holiness and hope in your own soul.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

15 Look then to yourselves, and see how carefully, exactly, and accurately (*τοις κατεσθαι*) ye ought to walk in the whole of your conversation, as Christian converts, that it be answerable to your new light and obligations, and according to the rule of the word, as persons under the eye of God and men, of enemies as well as friends, that your behaviour may not still be like ignorant, injudicious, and unwise people, that are estranged from the knowledge of Christ, and from the way of their duty and happiness, and heedlessly plunge themselves into iniquity and error to their own destruction; but like persons, that have learned Christ, and been taught by him as the truth is in Jesus, (*chap. iv. 20, 21.*) who hath given you light, (*ver. 14.*) and like persons, that take heed of giving any occasion for stumbling, or triumph to unbelievers, or of imprudently and unnecessarily exposing yourselves to their rage, and running into danger.

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

16 And see that, by a diligent and circumspect walk, ye redeem time, and opportunity, (*τοις καιροις*) and retrieve what has been lost, for the best purposes, that it may be employed in a holy manner for the glory of God and the benefit of your own souls, and for doing good to others: And as merchants improve all advantageous seasons for traffic; so be ye as it were continually buying and gaining these precious talents (*τις αγοραζετε*) out of the hands of sin and Satan, to which they formerly were devoted; out of the hands of sloth, ease, and worldly business and pleasure; and out of the hands of your enemies, that would be glad to take away your liberty and your lives: And ye ought to be the more careful herein, because the times, in which ye live, are days of great immorality, ignorance, and profaneness, and days of trouble, danger, and persecution, for the sake of Christ, which may soon bring all time and opportunities of service to a period with you; and they are days, in which both carnal *Jews* and *Gentiles* continually watch for your halting, that they may speak evil against you, and against Christ and his gospel on your account.

17 Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

17 Take heed therefore that ye do not continue to act an inconsiderate foolish part, as in the days of your ignorance and unregeneracy, in things relating to God and your own duty and salvation; nor needlessly expose yourselves to the malice and fury of your enemies in these evil days: But, suitable to your present state and

character, endeavour, through divine grace, to live and act, as those that understand, and attentively consider the mind and will of the Lord Christ, with respect to the cautiousness and prudence of your behaviour, that ye may be *wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*, (Mat. x. 16.); and with respect to the purity of your conversation in the world; that it may be blameless, becoming saints, and such as is acceptable to the Lord, and as he requires in his word, (*ver. 3, 4, 10.*)

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

18 And to prevent your running into the abominable practices that I have been already cautioning you against, take heed of another flagrant sin, which is not only in itself a rioting upon the bounties of providence, and an unmanly and worse than brutal vice, but throws one off from his guard, and exposes him to every temptation to lasciviousness, and all other shameful iniquities; and *that* is drunkenness \*, by so free a use of wine or other strong intoxicating liquors, as is injurious to health, or clouds the mind, and enfeebles, debiles, and disorders all the powers of the soul, and renders them incapable of rational, holy, and regular conduct; and is attended with, or prompts unto, all excess (*excessus*) of intemperance and madness, rioting, and debauchery, and all superfluity of naughtiness. But, in opposition to the sordid and injurious pleasure of drinking to excess, let it be your great concern, that, in the use of all proper and appointed means, ye may be filled with the holy influences, gifts and graces, joys and consolations of the divine Spirit, wherein there can be no danger of having too much, or of being misled into any indecent or unworthy behaviour by them. This, instead of carrying you into revellings and all extravagancies of mirth and jollity, will inspire you with a noble, pure, and sublime pleasure, which should vent itself in a suitable manner;

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

19 Speaking among yourselves, to your mutual edification and admonition, (*Col. iii. 16.*) by singing forth the praises of God, in all the variety of them, at your religious assemblies, by joining your voices in proper tunes, to utter poetic compositions, such as psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs †; whether those that are already

#### N O T E S.

\* Drunkenness was a reigning sin at Ephesus, and a vice that the Gentiles were scandalously guilty of in some of their idolatrous feasts, as particularly in that which they celebrated in honour of Bacchus, whom they esteemed as *the god of wine*.

† Some have observed, that, though most of David's poetical compositions for the use

of the church are called in their titles *Psalms*; yet the word used in the title of Psalm. cxlv. though rendered there a Psalm, signifies also, and is sometimes rendered by the *Servant*, a *Psalm*; and the titles of Ps. cxv. — cxviii. signify, and are rendered a *song*. But possibly the *hymns* and *spiritual songs* here meant, in distinction from *psalms*, might signify



already left, under divine inspiration, for the use of the church, or those that inspired men among you may give out by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, suitable to present occasions: All which are to be sung in a spiritual manner for spiritual ends; and your united praises, *with the voice together*, (Isa. lii. 8.) should be with the sweetest harmony and delight in your own hearts, by their ascending with your voices to the Lord Jesus, and shewing forth his glory, and the glory of God in him, which will be as pleasing to him, and to your own souls, as the most melodious music can be to your ears.

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

20 And the work of praise should not only bear a part in the solemn worship of your religious assemblies; but should run through your whole lives, that ye may always maintain a grateful disposition of heart, and may *bles*s the Lord at all times, and his praise may be continually in your mouths, (Psal. xxxiv. 1.) for every mercy, spiritual and temporal, and for every dispensation of providence and grace, yea, for afflictions themselves, as they work together for good, as well as for enjoyments, and sensible tokens of divine favour: And so ye ought, on all occasions, to express your thankfulness for all things, to God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him, as the original source and first cause of all the good things which we have and hope for: And this thanksgiving should be rendered to him through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Col. iii. 17.) with a dependence on him, and mention of his name, as our only mediator, and the purchaser of all blessings, on whose account they are bestowed upon us; and thro' whom our praises, as well as prayers for them, are to be presented, and are made acceptable to God. (Heb. xiii. 15. and 1 Pet. ii. 5.)

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

21 And these divine influences (*ver.* 18.) will direct and oblige, assist and enable you to behave in a becoming manner, in all natural and civil, public and private relations of life\*, according to the rank, which ye respectively

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such divine orders, or poetic compositions, as our Lord is thought by some to have delivered at the institution of his supper. Matth. xxvi. 30. and as the songs of Elizabeth, the virgin Mary, Zacharias, and others spoken of in 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

\* The Jews had such contemptible thoughts of the uncircumcised Gentiles, as to imagine that they were not bound to perform those duties toward them that belonged to the nearest relations in life; and it seems as if some such notion had obtained among Judaizing Christians, with regard to

uncircumcised believers; and among converts from heathenism, with regard to unbelieving husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; with a view to which the apostle establishes the obligations resulting from all these relations, whether both parties were believers or not, in a discourse at large, 1 Cor. chap. vii. And with the like view, he may be supposed in this and the next chapter, to insist on the duties of *husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants*, that believers might not think themselves released from the duties, which

spectively bear in them, that ye all may perform those mutual duties one towards another, which belong to your several stations, as persons that have an awe of God upon your consciences, and are afraid of offending him, who has enjoined these duties upon you; and as persons that are under the government of his new-covenant-fear in your hearts, to keep you from sinning against him, and to engage you to submit one to another in every thing that he has commanded, and as far as may be for his glory, and consistent with other duties that ye owe to him, whose absolute supremacy claims a prior and unreserved submission to him.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord,

22 As to instance particularly in some *relative* duties, let those of you, that are believing *wives*, pay all becoming reverence and honour, subjection and obedience, in all lawful things, to your husbands, whom ye should consider and esteem, and be the more cheerfully submissive to, as your own husbands, who by the law of marriage are and ought to be for you, and no other women, only beloved of you, and loving you †: And let all your acts therein be as in the sight and presence of the Lord Christ, with an eye to his glory, as also in obedience to his authority, (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) and in resemblance of that subjection which the church owes to him, and by which this duty is illustrated and enforced upon you.

23 For

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which result from either of these relations, even supposing, that it subsisted between them and such as were unbelievers: And the same may be observed with respect to the obedience that was due to *heathen magistrates*, and the offices of love and kindness that were to be discharged towards all ranks and degrees of persons, whatsoever their characters or professions might be as to religion; which he also insisted on at large in the xiii<sup>th</sup> chapter to the Romans. All this is designed to shew that the Christian religion is so far from dissolving, that it confirms and increases obligations to duties of all natural and civil relations. And if these relative duties were to be observed, even towards heathens and unbelievers, much more must they be binding upon Christians one towards another. (See the note on 1 Tim. vi. 1.)

† The apostle's discourse (as *Zanchy* observes) on particular relative duties, is in the natural order, in which the relations themselves commenced in the world, which was first between *husband and wife*; next between *parents and children*; and lastly between *masters and servants*. The apostle accordingly begins with the duties of the first of these relations in this chapter, and goes on to those

of *parents and children*, and *masters and servants* in the next; and he keeps the same order in his exhortations to all these in his epistle to the Colossians, chap. iii. 18,—23 and iv. 1, &c. But it may be farther observed, that, in both these epistles, he first insists on the duties of the *inferior*, and then on those of the *superior* relatives in every instance of them. And the apostle *Peter* proceeds in the same order, when he speaks of the duties of *wives and husbands*, 1 Pet. iii. 1,—7. The reasons of this may probably be, because the duties of *wives, children, and servants* are most against the grain of corrupt nature, most difficult in themselves: and most apt to be objected against, and not so readily attended to, and complied with; and because, if these relatives faithfully perform the duties on their part, it would lay a more endearing obligation upon *husbands, parents, and masters* to treat their *wives, children, and servants*, with love and tenderness, and would leave them the more shamefully inexcusable were they to be wanting in their duty towards them. Hence the apostle *Peter*, in the place but now referred to, exhorts believing *wives* to win their *husbands* by a becoming spirit and conversation,

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

23 For by the law of nature and of marriage, (see *Gen.* iii. 16. *1 Cor.* xi. 8, 9. and *1 Tim.* ii. 13, 14.) the husband is appointed to be the head, guide, and guardian of the wife, in a somewhat-like manner, as, by the constitution of the new covenant, Christ, in his office-capacity, is the head, governor, and protector of the whole church, which is espoused unto him; and suitable to this near and tender relation into which he has taken them, he has acted the part of a kind and faithful husband in being the Redeemer, and Saviour of all the members of his mystical body, to deliver them from sin and wrath, and secure eternal happiness to them; and has therein set all Christian husbands a bright and noble pattern of that affection, care, and concern, which they ought to have for the safety and defence, maintenance, comfort, and happiness of their wives, (*ver.* 25, 28, &c.)

24 Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

24 As therefore the church is cheerfully and faithfully subject to the authority of Christ in all spiritual concerns; so in imitation of them, (though not with the same absolute and unlimited subjection to any creature, as is due to Christ himself) let the wives behave with meekness, willingness, and fidelity, in a becoming subjection to their own lawful husbands in all civil things, as far as is fit in the Lord. (*Col.* iii. 18.)

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it:

25 On the other hand, husbands should consider, and faithfully discharge their duty toward their wives, as it is all comprehended in the great law of love, which sweetens the relation, and has the most powerful influence to command a friendly and becoming behaviour in it. Let those of you then, that are believing husbands, take heed of tyrannizing over your wives, or being imperious, morose, or passionate and bitter against them, (*Col.* iii. 19.) but make their yoke as easy and agreeable as possible, and allure them, by a kind and gentle carriage, to all the respect and obedience that is reasonable for you to expect from them: See that ye give honour to them, (*1 Pet.* iii. 7.) and that your hearts be full of, and all your looks, words, and actions shew forth, the most tender, ardent, and endearing love to them, in bearing with their infirmities, and doing all that in you lyes for their temporal and spiritual good, and for convincing them of your peculiar affection to them: And ye should herein imitate, and be influenced by, the special and superlative love of Christ to his church, who has given the most affecting and unparalleled demonstration of his peculiar love to them, that possibly can be, in that he freely yielded himself

himself up to the worst of deaths in their room and stead, and for their spiritual and eternal benefit :

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word ;

26 That he might take away the power and pollution of sin from all its members, and infuse a principle of true holiness into them, and so consecrate them to God by the sanctification of his Spirit, as (*Kata-purao*) having purged them from the guilt of sin by his atoning blood, (see *Heb.* i. 3. and ix. 14, 22. and x. 2.) which effects of his blood and Spirit are signified by the cleansing quality of water, (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 25.) and by legal purifications with the ashes of a beifer sprinkling the unclean, (*Heb.* ix. 13. compared with *Numb.* xix. 17, &c.) as also by the water, with which they are washed at their baptism \* ; and he, in the greatness of his love communicates these benefits by means of the gospel preached to them, and received and applied by faith, for *cleansing them from all sin by his blood*, (1 *John* i. 7.) and *renewing them by the Holy Ghost*, (*Tit.* iii. 5.)

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.

27 That he might set every member of the church before his immediate presence, and exhibit them to his view, and make them every way agreeable, acceptable, and delightful to him, through the purifications and ornaments which he himself bestows upon them, as a *bride prepared and adorned for her husband*, (*Rev.* xxi. 2.) and so might present the whole church, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy, (*Jude*, ver. 24.) all over beautiful and shining in illustrious honour with himself, with whom they shall appear in glory, (*Col.* iii. 4.) as being not only washed from their sins in his own blood, and arrayed with his infinitely amiable and perfect righteousness ; but also sanctified throughout by his Spirit, so as to have no remainders of pollution or deformity, any more than of guilt ; no, not the least spot to defile their garments, nor the least wrinkle to detract from their beauty, nor any such thing as might abate their perfection, or tarnish their lustre ; but that, as the sacrifices offered to God under the law, and wives espoused to their husbands, were to be without blemish, so they might be presented as perfect, in holiness, as in happiness,

#### N O T E.

\* Here, as some apprehend, is an allusion to the mode of baptism by immersion, as at other times there are allusions to the mode of sprinkling or pouring water. (See the note on *Rom.* vi. 4.) And yet I think it cannot be inferred, that the apostle here intended to refer to baptism by immersion ; because the word (*lavage*) signifies, as our translators have rendered it, washing in general, whatever be the way and manner of it : (Vid.

*Said. Lexic.*) And persons might be baptized with the water of a laver, as is commonly done with the water of a basin, which is one sort of laver, by pouring or sprinkling, without having their whole bodies immersed in it. But others think that the allusion is to Jewish washings ; and others, that it is to nuptial washings of a bride, when she was to be presented to her husband.

happiness, and without the least defect, *unblameable and unreprouceable in his sight*, (Col. i. 22.)

28 So, to apply this to the argument in hand, all husbands, that pretend to any hope of interest in this peculiar, superlative and abiding love of Christ, ought to be influenced by a consideration of it to imitate him, as far as possible, in the sincerity, constancy, and ardour of their affection to their wives; even with such a sort of kind and tender love, as they would always maintain and cultivate for the welfare, ease, and comfort of their own natural bodies; their wives being relatively one flesh with them, and as it were the restored part of themselves, (*ver. 31.*) since the woman was at first taken out of the man: So that he who exercises love in its most tender and engaging forms towards his wife, does it all, in effect, towards himself, and he will find the advantage of it. It is in reality self-love; and surely nothing can be a stronger inducement to it than this.

29 For no man, in his senses, ever has been so inhuman, or so very destitute of a principle of self-love, as to neglect and abuse his own body, out of enmity to it, and to its health, comfort, and ease, as it is his own flesh; but it is natural to him to feed and cloath it, for its sustenance, refreshment, and warmth, and to supply it with such things as are needful and convenient for it: And every husband ought to do the like by his wife, who is one flesh with him; even as the Lord Jesus, in his infinite love, has taken the best, the most affectionate, and effectual care of his church, which he has espoused unto, and made one with himself.

30 For we, who believe in him, are members of that mystical body, of which he is the head; and in a spiritual sense are as closely united with him, and as dear to him, and receive all grace and glory from him, by virtue derived from his body which was broken for us, as if, by our near alliance to him in human nature, we had been *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*, as the wife was originally of her husband, according to what our first father Adam said of Eve, who was made of one of his ribs, (*Gen. ii. 22, 13.*)

31 And to shew how close the union is between the husband and his wife, and what mutual tenderness there ought to be between them, it is immediately added, as an establishment of the marriage-law in all future generations, (*Gen. ii. 24.*) Because of this original oneness of husband and wife, whenever any man hereafter shall enter into the matrimonial state, he shall be so weaned from his father and mother, as to place his

warmer

28 So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

warmer affections upon his wife, though without abating the love which he owes, and is ever to continue paying to them; and shall be ready to leave his parent's family (if it be needful) to dwell with her, and cleave to her: And these two, the man and wife, shall be accounted of, and shall treat one another with as much affection, as if they were in a *literal* sense but one body.

31 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

32 What I have been saying about the marriage of *Adam* and *Eve*, and the union of man and wife, contains a mystical sense, as it is emblematical, and carries a lively resemblance of a still more excellent and happy marriage, and of a more intimate union, which surpasses our comprehension: I mean that strict union, which is wonderfully made between Christ and his church, as he is their husband, and they are his spouse, and as he and they are closely united together, like one body, of which they are members, and he is the head, that animates and influences, rules, and governs, and takes the utmost care of them: And as *Eve* was brought forth out of *Adam's* side while he was asleep; so the church is produced in a spiritual manner, by virtue proceeding from the side of a crucified Saviour, when he was pierced, and slept the sleep of death, that they might live with him for ever.

33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

33 Nevertheless, these words of *Adam* concerning *Eve*, and concerning the marriage-state, have also a *literal* sense suitable to the design of the argument I have been upon, relating to the respective duties of husbands and wives: Therefore I conclude with observing that, according to the original law of matrimony, and the illustration which has now been further given of duties pertaining to it, from a consideration of the union that subsists between Christ and the church, it is the bounden duty of every husband among you in particular, and without exception, to love his wife with the same sincere, kind, and singular affection with which he loves himself, she being his second self, (*ver.* 28, 31.) And it is no less the duty of every wife among you, to pay all becoming respect and honour to her husband, not with a slavish fear, but with a conjugal love and reverence, and cautious fear of offending him.

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

With what cheerfulness should the dear children of God imitate their heavenly Father! And what an affecting and engaging motive to brotherly love is the dying love of Christ, who offered up himself as an atoning and acceptable sacrifice for us! But how unworthy the Christian's character, privileges, and obligations is it to give way to any sin, especially such shameful ones as heathens and unconverted sinners are infamous for! Neither covetousness, which is constructive idolatry

lattery; nor any sort of unchastity or impurity; nor any works of darkness, should ever be found, or countenanced, by those that profess themselves to be saints: For whatever vain deceivers may suggest to the contrary, such things are abominable and injurious, and exclude the practisers of them from the blessings of God and the Saviour's kingdom of grace and glory, and bring divine wrath upon their heads. What a visible change in conversation is to be expected from those that are awakened into life and light by the powerful voice of Christ! They should walk as children of the light, under the influence of the Spirit, unto all goodness, righteousness, and truth; their words and actions should carry such reproof to workers of iniquity, as shews that they have no fellowship with them in their evil deeds; but that they, upon trial, approve of those things that are acceptable to their Lord and Saviour, and to God through him. How watchful and careful ought they to be in their walk! They should be very circumspect to shun temptation, sin, and danger, and to redeem time for the best purposes, especially in evil days; and should behave wisely in an upright way, and not like ignorant and foolish people, who neither consider what they are doing, nor whither they are going. How pure and sublime are the joys that arise from being filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit! There is no danger of excess in these, as there is in being drunk with wine; they dispose us for singing the praises of God with harmonious voices, and the sweetest melody in our hearts; and make us thankful to him, through Christ Jesus, in every circumstance of things. But how concerned should we be to fill up all relations of life with the duties of them, from a principle of holy reverence and fear of God! Husbands and wives should not make a jest of, but conscientiously attend to the respective duties that result from their union with each other as one flesh. And O how happy would the marriage-state be, if both relatives, in their places, would study to please one another! Conjugal love would keep all right between them, and secure the duties on both sides. How intimate and endearing is the relation and affection of Christ to his church! He is full of tender love and care toward them, and freely gave himself for them, that he might take away the guilt, power, and defilement of their sins by his blood and spirit, and by means of his word; and might, at length, present them all to himself, arrayed in glory, like a spouse fit for such an illustrious husband to delight in, as having no spot or blemish of any kind upon them. How constraining ought his love to them be, to engage their most dutiful submission to him! And what a sweet influence should these considerations have upon every religious husband to love his wife as himself, and upon every religious wife to reverence her husband!

## C H A P. VI.

*The apostle proceeds to the relative duties of children and parents, 1,—4. Of servants and masters, 5,—9. Directs all sorts of Christians to put on their spiritual armour in the exercise of their graces, and in the use of those means which are necessary to defend and secure them against the enemies of their souls in this state of warfare, 10,—14. Desires their prayers for himself, 19, 20. And concludes his epistle with an account of the reasons of his sending Tychicus to them, and with his apostolic benediction, 21,—24.*

## TEXT.

Children, obey  
your parents  
in the Lord: for  
this is right.

## PARAPHRASE.

**T**O proceed to some other relative duties that are incumbent upon Christians: Let those of you that are sons or daughters, whatsoever your age or circumstances be in the world, remember your obligations, and be careful to pay all filial duty, to your fathers and mothers

thers

thers, (*ver.* 2.) whether they be believers or not, or whether they be circumcised or uncircumcised Christians, (see the note on *chap.* v. 21.) Harken to their counsels and commands; and yield a submissive, cheerful, and ready obedience to them in all lawful things, for the sake of the Lord Jesus, who has made it your duty to attend to their instructions, (*Prov.* i. 8.) for his glory, and suitable to your relation to him: For this obedience to parents is (*SIXTH*) a just debt, according to the law of nature and of all civilized nations; and is highly fit and equitable in itself, considering how much ye have depended upon, and been beholden to their care, kindness, and cost; and that, under God, ye owe your very beings to them. Still further to illustrate and enforce this duty;

2 Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,)

2 Remember that it is enjoined upon you in the fifth commandment of the *moral* law, (*Ex.* xx. 12.) which is particularly confirmed and enforced by our Lord, (*Mat.* xv. 4, &c.) and is of perpetual obligation, as requiring that every one of you, who stands in the relation of a son or daughter, should consider both your parents †, as naturally your superiors; should always think and speak honourably of them; should pay all submissive reverence and respect to them; and (if need be) should do what you can, by way of dutiful affection and requital, to afford an honourable maintenance and relief, not to your father only, but to your mother also, even in her state of widowhood, (*1 Tim.* v. 4.) that she may not be treated with contempt, (*Prov.* xxii. 22.) This is a matter of so great importance, that the commandment, relating to it, is set at the head of the second table of the law; being the very first of all its precepts, relating to that sort of duties: And, to give the greater encouragement to a diligent observation of it, it is the only precept about second-table duties, that is backed with the gracious promise of a blessing; and is indeed the only one, in the whole system of the moral law, that has any particular promise annexed peculiar to itself; *that* in the second commandment being of a more general nature, and relating to them that love God, and keep, not only *this*, but all his commandments, (*Ex.* xx. 6.)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

3 The blessing particularly promised, and remarkably suited to impress young minds, and to engage your obediential reverence of your father and mother is, that  
by

#### N O T E

† The *mother* seems here, and in several other places, to be particularly mentioned; because children are more apt to slight and disrespect their *mothers* than their fathers.



by the favour of God, which ordinarily adds the blessings of providence to dutiful children, you may be happy and prosperous in your temporal affairs, through all the circumstances of this life: And that your days may be lengthened out, with comfort upon earth, to a good old age \*.

4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

4 And as to the duties of *Christian-parents*, let those of you that are fathers †, in which mothers are also included, (*ver. 2.*) look upon your children as parts of yourselves; and (*μὴ παροργίζετε*) be very careful that ye do not by humourous or unreasonable impositions and restraints, or by rigorous and harsh usage, in words or blows, irritate their resentments, and exasperate their passions, *lest they be discouraged*, (*Col. iii. 21.*) and be prejudiced against you, and against the Christian religion itself, as though it taught you to be morose, ill-natured, and severe to them: but treat them with all kindness, lenity, and tenderness, and with persuasive arguments, to work upon their judgments and consciences, and engage their affection and duty toward you, and to make them in love with the good ways of the Lord: and give them a religious education, by making them familiarly conversant with the holy scriptures betimes, and adding catechetical instructions to assist their understandings from their childhood up, (*2 Tim. iii. 15.*) as also by prudent discipline and moderate corrections, when necessary and seasonable, (*Prov. xiii. 24.*) and by your own regular example, and daily prayers with and for them. In this manner, as a nurse cherishes her children, *nourish them up in the words of faith and good doctrine*, (*1 Tim. iv. 6.*) according to the commandment of the Lord, that, by his grace, they may learn to fear him and reverence their superiors, and may know the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ: watch over and restrain the first appearances of pride and passion, vanity and deceit, and all the early bud-dings of corrupt nature in them; warn them against youthful sins and errors, that would be destructive to their comfort, reputation, and usefulness in this world,

and

#### NOTES.

\* Though this promise had a primary reference to a long-continued enjoyment of all the plenty of the land of Canaan; yet it has a further reach, and is ordinarily fulfilled in providential favours to religiously dutiful children, under the gospel-dispensation: For godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, (*1 Tim. iv. 8.*) But the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to

obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it: He shall be exposed to the judgments of God, to bring him to an untimely and shameful end. (*Prov. xxx. 17.* See also *Matth. xv. 4.*)

† *Fathers* seems to be here specified, because they are commonly more stern and severe, than mothers, though these are also included.

and to their eternal happiness in the next; exert your parental authority, like faithful *Abraham*, (*Gen. xviii. 19.*) and to regulate their outward behaviour; and insure them to public, family, and secret worship; do all that in you lyes, in a humble dependence upon the Lord for his blessing, to cultivate their minds, morals, and religion, and to *train them up in the way they should go*, in hope that *when they are old, they will not depart from it*, (*Prov. xxii. 6.*)

3 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the Lord, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ:

5 To add one class more of *relative duties*, let those of you, that are in the quality of servants, make conscience of obeying all lawful commands of your earthly masters, inclusive of mistresses, who in things pertaining to the body and this present world, which will soon come to an end, are set over you by the providence of God, and have a right to the services of your stations, whether they be believers or not, (*1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.* and *Tit. ii. 9, 10.*) be willingly and faithfully subject to them, with a reverential and cautious fear of offending them; and with a dread of provoking their wrath, and much more the wrath of God against you, on account of your betraying your trusts, embezzling their goods, or disobeying their just orders: and see that ye do all this with a sincere, ingenuous, and honest heart, without deceit or guile, as those that therein desire and intend to serve the Lord Christ, who has commanded civil, as well as religious duties, and whose name and doctrine are honoured by your performing them in obedience to him, and according to his will.

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

6 Let all your services to them be fulfilled with diligence and constancy, not merely while their eyes, or the eyes of other people, are upon you to observe how ye behave, as though ye only aimed at gaining their good opinion, and at approving yourselves to men, for secular advantages: but let it be done with a special reference to the Lord Christ, as those that are sensible of your being always under his eye, and that ye must give an account to him; and as those that are ambitious of pleasing, honouring, and obeying him, by discharging your duty to your masters, with all good fidelity, from a sincere principle of religion toward God, as it is agreeable to his will, who requires it of you.

7 With good will, doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men;

7 In this manner, apply to all the business of your stations freely, affectionately, and industriously, with all readiness of mind, as persons that love your masters, and have their interest at heart; and that take pleasure in doing them all the service to which God and they call you: and engage in it from a sense of duty to Christ,

Christ, your supreme Lord and Master, that ye may serve, please, and glorify him, who is always observing your inmost thoughts, as well as outward actions; and not merely to acquit yourselves well in the sight, and to gain the esteem of men.

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

8 Let servants be encouraged to be careful and faithful in performing all the duties of their places, as being well assured, from the word of God, that whatsoever good service any one does in the manner but now mentioned; though his master, after the flesh, should reward him evil for good; yet, the Lord Jesus, the great Judge of all, will graciously, and in faithfulness to his promise, make him a rich amends, according to his work, in the great day of account, whether he be a bond-slave, or a freer sort of servant; which likewise is equally true, as to every other faithful person, whether he be, in any civil respect, a bondman, or a freeman\*.

9 And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

9 And as the forementioned duties are owing from Christian servants to their masters; so there are duties no less incumbent upon believing *masters* toward their servants, whether they be Christians or not, and whether they be their slaves or their hired servants; let those of you therefore, who are masters, take care that ye perform the duties of your places and relations, with the like principles and views, in singleness of heart as to Christ, and according to the will of God; and that ye behave toward them with gentleness and humanity, and not in a domineering way, with stern and severe menaces, insolence, and cruelty, as if ye were a higher species of creatures, and they were to be ruled with rigour, and only by fear and terror, and were to be treated more like brutes than men: but always remember that ye yourselves have also a superior Lord and Master over you, even Christ, whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom rules over all, who constantly takes notice of every part of your conduct toward your servants, as well as of theirs toward you; and will call you to as strict an account for it, as he will them for theirs: for as persons of all ranks are alike little before him, and he is not moved in his regards to them, by any secular differences of superior or inferior stations

#### N O T E.

\* As the apostle is hitherto speaking only of the duty of *servants*, and does not enter upon that of *masters*, till the next verse, *bond or free*, seems to relate to *bond-slaves*, that were so by birth, or capture in war, or by purchase; and to *hired servants*, that were comparatively free, as they were at liberty, till they had let themselves out by their own consent; and as they might use their freedom

for continuing a longer or shorter time, upon proper warning in their master's service, or not; and so the exhortation suits the case of all sorts of servants in all ages. But if we consider this passage as a transition from the duty of servants to the duty of masters, then *bond* (as all the expositors I have met with take it) refers to *servants*, and *free* to *masters*, or at least to persons that were not servants.

stations and circumstances in this world; so he will impartially judge *masters*, as well as *servants*, in the great day, and deal with them according to their respective behaviour upon earth.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

10 Now, to conclude with exhortations that equally concern you all, my dear Christian brethren, whatsoever be your external conditions and relations in this life; as ever ye would be enabled to fulfil the duties of your several places, and to resist and overcome all the powers of sin, Satan, and the world, which will turn you aside from them, and oppose you in your progress heaven-ward; set out, and go on every step of your way, like valiant soldiers under the Captain of salvation, not in your own strength, which is no better than weakness; but in the strength of Christ, through whom ye may do all things, (*Phil. iv. 13.*) *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, (*2 Tim. ii. 1.*) and in his almighty aids and influences, by daily derivations: from him to make you equal to every duty and service, suffering and conflict, to which at any time ye are called.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

11 And that, setting out in this strength, ye may be thoroughly equipped and furnished for all encounters against your spiritual enemies, of which Satan is their head and chief; let it be your earnest endeavour, like soldiers sensible of the power of their enemies, and of their own weakness and dangers, to live in the daily and hourly exercise of all those graces, and in the use of all those means, which God has appointed and provided, gives and makes effectual, for defence and safety, like the most excellent armour of proof, which ye are to put on to guard and cover you from head to foot, \* that by means thereof, in fighting the Lord's battles, ye may be enabled to stand and maintain your ground against, and defeat the numerous, ensnaring, circumventing, fallacious, and cunning methods (*μεθοδους*) of assault, from the devil and all his instruments. And ye have the greatest need of all this help.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness

12 For in this holy warfare all of us, who have listed under Christ's banner, whether we be ministers or private Christians, are called, like persons singled out for that purpose, to close and sharp combat and contention against, not only the carnal reasonings and interests of animal-

#### N O T E.

\* As in the description of the spiritual armour, ver. 14,—17. there is an allusion to a *girdle*, *breast-plate*, *shoes*, and a *helmet*, that are put upon the body, and to a *sword* and *shield*, that are held in the hand, the apostle

here speaks of believers putting on, (*νδουσαντες*) and in ver. 13. of taking to them (*αυλαβειν*) the whole armour of God; and so includes a proper use of every part of it.

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

animal-nature, consisting of flesh and blood, and against wicked men, and the ungodly rulers and magistrates of this world, (see the note on *chap. i. 21.*) who dwell in mortal flesh, and are attended with human passions, like ourselves; but we have still more potent and formidable, as well as invisible adversaries to deal with, that have the nearest access to the inmost powers of our souls before we are aware; we are called to guard, and engage against all ranks and orders of malicious, sagacious, deceitful, powerful and diabolical spirits, even against the mighty princes and governors, that have a superior dominion over the fallen angels and fallen men, and have all the legions of hell at their beck to practise upon human nature, and execute their horrid and mischievous designs; we are called to enter the lists against these malignant spirits, that, like a strong man armed, (*Luke xi. 21.*) have, by divine permission, erected a kingdom of darkness, taken possession of, and usurped an empire over the minds and hearts of the blinded sinners of this world, whose thoughts and ways are works of darkness, (*chap. ii. 2.*) and we are called to fight against those spiritual enemies\*, who are themselves most vilely and implacably wicked; who hover about in the air very near us, and all around us, and make it their business to propagate spiritual wickedness, such as unbelief, pride, idolatry, and error, relating to spiritual things; and malice, wrath, and envy, which resemble their own wicked temper, and are most immediately seated in men's souls; and who contend with us about the spiritual things of heaven and glory, to prevent our obtaining the eternal inheritance.

13 Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

13 Since therefore ye have so many subtle and powerful enemies, above your match, to contend with, see that ye be armed *Cup-a-pee*, and that in the strength of Christ ye continually handle your arms, (see the note on *ver. 11.*) and make a proper use of every spiritual weapon, offensive and defensive, which God has furnished you with, that ye may be capable of resisting and overcoming all these formidable adversaries, in every day of trial and danger from this evil world, and from the evil one, and indeed in all the days of your lives, which are *few and evil*, (*Gen. xlvii. 9.*) as also in the day of death, which of all others is the worst to those, who

#### N O T E.

\* Spiritual wickedness in high places (*τα πνευματικά τα πονηρά ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*) might be most strictly and grammatically rendered *spirits of wickedness in heavens*,

whether in heavenly places, or heavenly things; and relates not to earthly magistrates, but to the fallen angels, as opposed to *flesh and blood*.

who are not in good case to meet it; and that when ye have gone through all the fatigues of your conflicts, acquitted yourselves as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and finished your warfare, ye may stand as triumphant conquerors, through him that has loved you; and may stand before him with boldness at his coming. (See the note on *Luke xxi. 36.*)

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

14 In order therefore to your obtaining a glorious victory †, *stand fast in the Lord*, (1 *Thess. iii. 8.*); stand to your arms, and in your proper stations, indefatigably and incessantly, with all watchfulness and diligence, (1 *Pet. v. 8, 9.*) and keep your standing with steadfastness in the field of battle: And that ye may not be exposed to your enemies, but may effectually resist and put them to flight, see that no part of your spiritual armour be wanting or neglected. If ye would know what are its several parts, which ye are to put on, and take to yourselves, (*ver. 11, 13.*) and how to use them for defeating the temptations and assaults of the devil and his agents, observe the following particulars: As soldiers use to gird themselves with a broad belt to keep up their long garments, (see the note on *Luke xii. 35.*) and buckle them and the several parts of their armour close together, as also to fortify their loins, that they may be the stronger and fitter for agility, labour and fatigue in war; so encompass yourselves as it were with sincerity and uprightness of heart, and with truth and honesty of conversation, *that righteousness and faithfulness may be the girdle of your loins*, (*Isa. xi. 5.*) to keep you steady, resolute, and active in every spiritual encounter\*. And as soldiers have their *breast-plate* to defend the heart, and other vitals of the body against the

#### N O T E S.

† As in the general view, so in the particular description of the Christian's armour, all the terms are of a military strain, in allusion to such pieces of armour, and such weapons, as soldiers were wont to put on, or make use of in war for their own defence, and for annoying their enemies: But (as some have observed) here is no armour for the back, which may intimate that we should never turn our backs to our spiritual enemies, by a cowardly flight, that would expose us to danger; but should always face them with holy courage, and resist them steadfastly in the faith, that they may flee from us, instead of our fleeing from them: And though the word *stand* is the same here and in the close of the last preceding verse; yet, I apprehend, 'tis to be considered in a different respect, as that relates to the standing of a conqueror after the battle is over, and this to

standing and maintaining our ground in the field of battle, during the encounter.

\* By *truth* in the former, and *righteousness* in the latter part of this verse, some understand the doctrine of the gospel, and the righteousness of Christ: But these, I think, are rather to be referred to other parts of the spiritual armour, which are mentioned in the following verses. The doctrine of the gospel, or the word of truth, falls in with, either the gospel of peace, or the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, *ver. 15, 17.* and Christ's righteousness, which is so important and necessary a part of the Christian armour, that without a humble dependence upon it by faith, the warfare can never be acceptably and unsuccessfully managed and accomplished, may more properly belong to the field of faith, which the apostle so emphatically speaks of, *ver. 16.* as sufficient to quench all the fiery darts

the mortal wounds, which their enemies generally aim at making in those parts; so labour, by the assistance of the Spirit, to live in the daily exercise of *righteousness and true holiness*, (chap. iv. 24.) which proceed from faith and love, (1 *Thes.* v. 8.) and are an imitation of our Lord himself, who *put on righteousness as a breast-plate*. (Isa. lix. 17.)

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

15 Furthermore, as soldiers are wont to wear *greaves of brass*, (1 *Sam.* xvii. 6.) or a sort of strong boots, to guard their feet and legs against briars and thorns, traps and rugged ways, sharp spikes and stones, that are laid by the enemy to retard their marches: so let the whole of your walk and warfare be disengaged from worldly thoughts, affections, and pursuits, that would hinder you in your Christian course; and be full of holy resolutions, by divine grace, to hold on your way thro' all hardships and dangers, that ye may be fortified against the many snares and temptations that lye in wait for you; and may be ready and prepared for every encounter, by a proper use of the doctrine of the gospel, in frequent meditations upon it, and in a firm belief, and regular profession, and improvement of it, according to its promises, encouragements, and provisions; and according to its great design of promoting all manner of spiritual prosperity, which is included in the term *peace*; as particularly, *peace* with God and in your own souls, and with fellow-Christians; yea, as *far as in you lyes*, and lawfully may be, *with all men*, (Rom. xii. 18.) that none may hurt or discompose, reproach or embroil you.

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked:

16 But especially, as soldiers have their *shields*, which they can turn every way for the defence of one or another part of the body, and of their other armour, that may be most exposed to danger; and for warding off the sharp and poisonous darts and arrows of the enemy, from what quarter soever they are thrown †; so, as the surest defence of your souls from all the fierce attacks of Satan, whether in a way of accusation for sin, or of excitation to it; and as a sort of universal covering

#### N O T E S.

*darts of the wicked.* (See Gurnall's *Christian Armour*.) And therefore, to keep the several parts of this armour as distinct as possible, I take *truth and righteousness* here to signify *fidelity and holiness in heart and life*, which are spoken of as fruits of the Spirit. chap. v. 9.

† As the venomous serpents were called *fiery serpents*, Numb. xxi. 6. so *fiery darts* allude to these poisonous darts, which barbarous

nations used in war, and which inflamed the parts that were wounded with them, and flew swiftly and secretly, like darts of a killing nature, before men were aware: And these *fiery darts of the devil* seem to be principally meant of his most horrid, violent, and sudden injections, that fill the soul with the utmost distress, and have the most dangerous tendencies and effects, when they are indulged and complied with.

ing to the whole man, and to all the other parts of your Christian armour; let a lively exercise of faith on Christ, *your shield*, (Psal. lxxxiv. 9.) on his blood and righteousness for pardon and justification, and all needful supplies of strength and succour, (see the note on ver. 14.) together with a humble and firm dependence on the power and grace of God in him, as a shield, (Gen. xv. 1. and Psal. v. 12.) and on the promises of the new covenant; with realizing views of invisible and eternal things; let this be your shield; in the use of which ye shall be effectually enabled to refute and silence every charge of guilt which your grand adversary would fasten upon your consciences, in order to his terrifying and driving you into despair; and by holding up his shield of faith, ye shall be able to repel, and take off the force of all his attempts to surprize and hurry you into hard and blasphemous thoughts of God, and Christ, and religion, and into sudden violent emotions to wrath and revenge, or into fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, or into any other sin. Whatsoever his furious temptations or sudden suggestions may be, that, like poisonous darts, penetrate and inflame the soul with horror, anguish, and guilt, wherever they strike; all of them will be as effectually disarmed of their force by this shield, as fire is of its strength when it is quenched: This will make you a match for all the assaults of that malignant evil one, the devil, whose nature and design is nothing but wickedness; and for all the efforts of this present evil world against you: For *the word of God abides* in strong believers, to enable them to overcome the wicked one, and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. (1 John ii. 14. and v. 4.)

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

17 And as warriors have their helmets to secure their heads; so let *the hope* of eternal life and salvation, (1 Thess. v. 8.) be as an helmet to guard you against fear and danger, and every mortal wound, to make you patiently endure all hardships, and to fortify you against the most furious and threatening attacks of Satan and all his confederates: And as valiant soldiers draw their swords to defend themselves, and cut down their enemies; so hold up, in the hand of faith, the promises, threatnings, and commands, and every other part of divine revelation, which may be called *the sword of the Spirit*, as it is a spiritual weapon of warfare, and as the Holy Spirit indited, and adapted it to all exigencies, and enables believers to consider, understand, and apply it, as circumstances require; and to make an effectual improvement of it for their own safety and comfort,

fort,



fort, and for the destruction and confusion of all their soul's enemies, who can no more withstand it, when weilded and edged by faith, than the tempter could the answers of the Captain of our salvation, which he introduced with an, *It is written.* (Mat. iv. 4, 7, 10.)

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;

18 And as the war ye are engaged in is of a *spiritual* nature, and all your own attempts to exercise any grace, or make use of any means for resisting and overcoming the enemies of your souls, will be ineffectual, without the special aids of the divine Spirit; let every conflict be attended with solemn, stated, or ejaculatory prayer, in all sorts of earnest addresses to God; such as adorations, thanksgivings, and confessions, humble petitions and pleas in the name of Christ, on all occasions, in public and private, by the assistance of his Spirit, and with your whole hearts, for all seasonable help, to enable you to make a proper and spiritual use of every part of your Christian-armour to the best advantage, for your own preservation, and the vanquishing of sin, Satan, and the world: And be assiduously careful to maintain a praying frame of spirit, and to watch for all convenient seasons for prayer; as also to watch against the designs and methods of your adversaries, and for all opportunities and assistances to annoy and defeat them; and to watch for all influences of the Spirit in prayer, and for all answers to prayer; and see that ye be constant and unwearied herein, without fainting, though ye may not receive immediate answers of peace: And, like persons of a public spirit, be importunate in your repeated addresses to the throne of grace, wrestling with God, by humble faith, to avert all evils from, and confer all desirable blessings upon, not only yourselves, but all your fellow-Christians, the best of which needs your prayers, that they, as well as you, may keep their ground in this spiritual warfare, and may be progressive in light and grace, comfort and holiness, to the glory of God, and the confusion of the devil and all his instruments.

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel:

19 And since my present trials are very great, and my work, for which I, a poor frail sinful creature, am utterly insufficient of myself, is of the highest importance to the interests of Christ and the welfare of immortal souls; and since, in my public ministerial character, I am attended with as many, or more difficulties and temptations, than private Christians are exposed to, I earnestly beg your solemn prayers continually for me, your faithful and affectionate apostle and friend, that God would give me enlargement from my present bonds,

and graciously inspire me with suitable matter, and give me courage and freedom of speech in his work, that I may not be kept under restraint, nor be afraid or ashamed to preach Christ before his and my enemies; but may have opportunity of doing it openly, and may speak with all boldness, plainness, and liberty of spirit, and without partiality or reserve, in publishing the great doctrines of the gospel, which contain the unsearchable riches of Christ; and in asserting the glorious privileges of *Gentile* believers, which, though now clearly revealed, appears to be a strange and mysterious thing to the *Jews*.

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

20 For the preaching of this blessed gospel, I am sent by the Lord Jesus, as his ambassador, to negotiate the great affair of peace between God and sinners; and, for my faithfulness and zeal, in executing the trust which he has committed to me, I am, at this very time, a prisoner in chains at *Rome*, (see the note on *Acts* xii. 6.) which I cheerfully endure, and *faint not*, as *knowing whom I have believed*, (2 *Tim.* i. 12.) and that my reward is with him: and I earnestly intreat the continuance of your prayers; that, under all this difficulty and confinement, I may still have opportunity, and be animated to go on *preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus, with all confidence*, undauntedly, freely and plainly, according to the duty of my office, and the sense I have of it, without molestation from any one whomsoever, (*Acts* xxviii. 30, 31.)

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, *Tychicus* a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

21 But that ye may the better know how to direct your prayers to God for me, I have not only given you a hint of my present afflictive situation, and how it fares with me, in this letter, which I convey to you by the hands of *Tychicus*, one of your *Asiatic* friends, (*Acts* ix. 4.) who is a dear brother in the Lord, beloved of him, and of myself and you, and is an upright, diligent and laborious servant of Jesus Christ in the work of the ministry; but he also will give you a faithful account at large, by word of mouth, of all things that relate to my sufferings and comforts under them, to the treatment I meet with from enemies and friends, and to my own behaviour, and the success of what I am now permitted to do for Christ, under all the disadvantages and restraints that attend me:

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he

22 Though it would have been a great pleasure and advantage to me, to have enjoyed more of the good company of this beloved and faithful brother; yet, such is my love to you, that I have so far denied myself,

he might comfort  
your hearts.

self, as to send him for this very end and purpose, that ye may be fully acquainted how things go with me in my confinement; and particularly, how the Lord stands by me, and enables me to bear my trials with patience, resignation and holy fortitude; and that, by telling you how God is with me, and owns me, as well as by his free conversation, and preaching the gospel to you, he may revive your spirits, which are apt to be disheartened and cast down at my afflictions; and may encourage you, from my example, to trust in the Lord, and go on in his good ways, amidst all the opposition ye may meet with for Christ and the gospel's sake.

23 Peace be to  
the brethren, and  
love with faith  
from God the Fa-  
ther, and the  
Lord Jesus Christ.

23 My heart's desire and prayer is, that peace with God, peace in your own minds, and peace one with another, and all manner of prosperity in soul and body, may continue and abound among the holy brethren and members of the church, which are with you, whether they be ministers or private Christians; and that, under a sense of God's love to them, their hearts may be filled with the most ardent growing affection to him and one another, together with, and as the result of, the most lively exercise of that faith which works by love. May all this happiness, and both these excellent cardinal graces of the Spirit, which lead on to all the rest, flourish and increase in their souls, by special and continued influence from God the Father, who, in the œconomy of salvation, is the original fountain of all the blessings of the new covenant; and from our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the great and only Mediator between God and man, and, in that quality, is the purchaser and dispenser of all the good things we have and hope for, relating to this world, and that which is to come!

24 Grace be  
with all them  
that love our  
Lord Jesus Christ  
in sincerity. A-  
men.

24 May the free love and favour of Christ, and of God in him, and all its blessed fruits and effects, especially in all seasonable discoveries, communications and assistances, to the producing of strong and lively exercises of every grace, be richly extended both to those at *Ephesus*, and to all in every place, who desire, esteem and delight in our only and complete Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, (*ἡ ἀγάπη*) heartily and unfeignedly, according to the truth of the gospel, without corrupting the doctrine of salvation alone by him, which is the main subject of this epistle; and without mixture of an inordinate love to this present world, or of any corrupt affection whatsoever, and *that* with continuance, till it shall be perfected in a glorious immortality! with sincere desire and assured hope of their being thus abundantly blessed by the God of all grace, I say, *Amen*.

## R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How clearly does the Christian religion state and enforce relative duties ! According to its dictates, children should honour and obey their parents in all lawful things, as ever they would approve themselves to the Lord, and have his blessing upon them : Parents should study to allure, and not discourage their children, nor irritate their angry passions by severe usage ; and should train them up in the good ways of God : Servants should make conscience of obeying the just orders of their masters, whether under their eye or not, with sincerity, cheerfulness, and fidelity, from a principle of faith in Christ, and in obedience to the will of God, for fear of offending him, and them, and in hope of a gracious reward at the day of judgment : And masters should treat their servants with equity and good temper, as knowing that they also have a greater Master in heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with him.—How many are the trials of all Christians, whatsoever their stations be in this world ! But how complete is the spiritual armour that God has furnished them with ! They, in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might, may withstand all the stratagems and assaults of Satan, and his instruments, in every evil day ; and may stand their ground, till they get through all their troubles and dangers, and stand complete conquerors and triumphers in heaven. Of what excellent advantage in this holy warfare, are sincerity and uprightness, and an exercise of righteousness and true holiness ! And of what high importance are faith in Christ, and his righteousness, and a good hope of eternal salvation, together with a due use of the holy scriptures, and daily prayer ! These will be unto us instead of a military belt, breastplate, and greaves, and of a shield, helmet, and sword, for defending us against, and repelling the fiery darts of the devil ; and the most furious attacks of all the enemies of our souls. How should these thoughts animate us with holy vigour and bravery against all the forces of hell and earth, in humble confidence, that, by the use of these means, we shall be enabled to withstand and overcome them ! — How extensive ought our prayers to be for every good thing, not only for ourselves, but for all saints, and for all the ministers of the gospel, that are faithful and beloved ; and especially for such as suffer persecution for Christ's sake, that their opportunities, courage, and faithfulness, may not fail ; but that they may go on to declare the incomprehensible truths of the gospel with all freedom, boldness, and plainness, as they ought, without restraint or reserve ! And how concerned should we be, that peace, with faith and love, may abound to all the saints, from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and that the free favour of God, through him, may be extended, in all its rich variety of manifestations, fruits and effects, to every one who sincerely loves our Lord Jesus Christ ! We should be ready to testify our earnest desire and hope of this, by saying, " Amen, so be it," and " so it shall be."

*The END of the FOURTH VOLUME.*

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BY JOHN GURSE, D. D.

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M. DCC. LXXV.





T H E   G E N E R A L

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

FIFTH AND SIXTH VOLUMES.

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PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, THESSALONIANS, TIMOTHY, TITUS, PHILEMON, and the HEBREWS. The General Epistles of JAMES, PETER, JOHN, and JUDE; and the REVELATION of St John the Divine.

**I**T is with wonder, blessing and praise, that I humbly adore the God of providence and grace for his preservation and assistances unto the finishing of my design on the New Testament; especially when I reflect, that several much more eminent servants of the blessed Jesus, and less advanced in years, have been cut off in the midst of their labours of this kind. And I gratefully acknowledge the obligations my Christian friends and brethren have heaped upon me, by their candid acceptance of the former volumes, and repeated desires to see the Work completed in two more; and by their generous encouragement to them, when they were advertised, as going to the press, though no proposals were published for a subscription.

THERE needs, I think, no further prefatory addition, than to refer my readers to what has been prefixed to the other volumes; and importunately to solicit their earnest prayers, that the God of all grace, through the atoning blood of the dear Redeemer, would abundantly pardon the many imperfections which I am sensible attend these poor performances; and that he would follow the whole with a special blessing, for rendering it subservient to the glorious cause of evangelical truth, and holiness, and Christian charity; for leading some ignorant, irreligious, and erroneous souls into the only true way of salvation according to the gospel; and for helping them and others onward therein to eternal life, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

THESE, I humbly trust, have been and are my governing aims in

*this, and all my other ministerial services; and if these, through divine influence, may in any measure be attained, I therein do and will rejoice and ascribe the entire glory of all to the God of my life, mercies, and hopes: This will give me the noblest satisfaction, and maintain the peace of my own mind, whatever censures, sceptical, prophane, or severe critics may pass upon the present attempt, or upon its Author, who counts it his honour to be a sincere lover of the doctrines of grace, and of pure and undefiled religion, and immortal souls, though a very unworthy servant of Jesus Christ,*

London, September 29,  
1752.

JOHN GUYSE.

THE

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## CHAP. II.

The apostle expresses his love to, and joy in believers, whom he had never seen, and encourages their continuing to walk in Christ, 1.—7. Cautions them against the errors of heathen philosophy, against the vanity of Jewish traditions, and against an observance of Mosaic rites, which had been completely fulfilled in Christ, beyond what they could hope to find elsewhere, 8.—17. Against worshipping of angels, as that were, in effect, renouncing

their head, Christ, 18, 19. And against legal ordinances and human institutions, that are of no advantage for spiritual purposes, 20.—23. p. 57.

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The apostle exhorts masters to do their duty toward servants, 1. Recommends to persons of all ranks the general duties of perseverance in prayer, and Christian prudence in behaviour and speech, 2.—6. Refers them to Ty-chicus and Onesimus, for an account of the state

state of his affairs, 7,—9. Sends salutations from several by name, together with his own;

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### CHAP. I.

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The apostle, to encourage their progress in faith and holiness, reminds them of the manner of his preaching and behaviour among them, 1,—12. And of their receiving the gospel, as the word of God, which effectually worked in them, 13,—16. And assures them of his joy on their account, and his desire of coming to them again, 17,—20. p. 92.

### CHAP. III.

The apostle gives still further proof of his great affection to them, in his having sent Timothy to establish and comfort them, 1,—5. In his rejoicing at the good tidings of their faith and love, 6,—9. And in his praying for an

opportunity of returning to them, and for their perseverance and increase in grace, till the second coming of Christ, 10,—13. p. 99.

### CHAP. IV.

The apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to chastity and holiness in their lives, 1,—3. To brotherly love, a peaceable behaviour and diligence in their secular callings, 9,—12. And to moderate their grief for the death of godly relations, and friends, in consideration of the glorious resurrection of their bodies at Christ's second coming; from which time forwards, all the saints, that may then be dead, or living upon the earth, shall be ever with the Lord, 13,—18. p. 103, 104.

### CHAP. V.

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**T**HE apostle salutes the church at Thessalonica, 1, 2. Blesses God for the growing state of their love and patience, 3, 4. And encourages them to persevere therein under all their sufferings for Christ, in consideration of his coming at the great day of account, to execute righteous judgment upon his and their enemies, and to be glorified in their own complete salvation, which the apostle hoped and prayed for on their behalf, 5,—12. p. 121.

### CHAP. II.

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he describes by his rise, reign, and ruin, and shews the just destruction that would come upon his insatuated subjects, that had pleasure in unrighteousness, 3,—12. But blesses God for the security of the Thessalonians from apostasy, by virtue of their eternal election, and effectual calling, and thereupon repeats his exhortation to steadfastness, and prays for them, 13,—17. p. 123.

### CHAP. III.

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CHAP. III.

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CHAP. V.

The apostle gives orders how to behave towards elder, and younger men and women, 1, 2. And toward poor widows, 3,—8. Describes the characters of such widows, as are, or are not, proper to be maintained by the church, and taken into its service, 9,—16. Shows the respect that is to be paid to those that are elders by office, 17,—19. But charges Timothy to take due care in rebuking offenders of all ranks and stations, in ordaining ministers, and in using such moderate refreshments, as were necessary for his own weak state of health, 20,—25. P. 171, 172.

CHAP. VI.

The apostle lays down the duty of Christians toward believing, as well as other masters, which Timothy ought to insist upon, with a severe reproof to judaizers that taught otherwise, 1,—5. Shows the advantage of:edleness with contentment, and the danger of covetous pursuits after riches, 6,—10. Directs Timothy to a contrary course, 11, 12. Gives him a solemn charge to behave faithfully in a persevering attention to his orders, and in admonishing the rich not to trust in their riches, but in the living God, and to improve his bounties to the best purposes; and repeats his charge with some enlargement, closing all with a short, but comprehensive benediction, 13,—21. P. 181, 182.

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PAUL asserts his apostolic character, salutes Timothy, and expresses his great affection to him, in remembrance of his sympathizing tears and unfeigned faith, 1,—5. Exhorts him to a diligent improvement of his spiritual gifts, without fear or shame, on account of sufferings for Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel; and to hold fast that blessed doctrine, which was committed to him, 6,—14. And tells him of many that had basely deserted him; but speaks with honour and affection of Onesiphorus, for his kindness to him, 15,—18. P. 191.

CHAP. II.

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to God, warning him to shun vain babblings and dangerous errors, that eat like a canker, as in the instances of Hymeneus and Philetus, and comforts him with the thought, that nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, 14,—19. Tells him that several sorts of professors are to be expected in the church, as various sorts of vessels are used in a great house, 20, 21. And charges him to flee youthful lusts, and to manage the whole of his conversation, ministry, and zeal against error, with a becoming in check of self, as most likely to be successful, 22,—26. P. 199.

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## CHAP. IV.

The apostle most solemnly charges Timothy to be diligent in his ministerial work, though many will not endure sound doctrine, 1.—5. Enforces the charge from a consideration of his own approaching martyrdom, which would have a glorious issue, 6.—8. Desires him to come speedily to him, and bring Mark and

certain mentioned things along with him, 9.—13. Cautions him against Alexander the copper-smith, and complains of such as had deserted him; but prays for them, and expresses his faith as to his own preservation to the heavenly kingdom, 14.—18. And concludes with salutations and his usual benediction, 19.—22. p. 216.

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## CHAP. II.

The apostle directs Titus to inculcate such duties upon younger and older Christians, as are becoming sound doctrine, and to be exemplary in them himself, 1.—8. To enjoin believing servants to be obedient to their masters for the honour of the doctrine of Christ, which they profess, 9. 10. And to enforce all this from a consideration of the holy design of the gospel, from the prospect it gives of heavenly glory, and from the end of Christ's death, which equally concern believers of all ranks and sta-

tions, and are to be urged upon them with all becoming authority, 11.—15. p. 233.

## CHAP. III.

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Philemon's kind regards, and engage him to accept of the return of his penitent fugitive, who would now make him a rich amends for all the wisdoms he had formerly been guilty of; and for whom the apostle promises to make up any loss that Philemon had sustained by him, 8.—12. And then concludes, according to his custom, with salutations, and a benediction, 13.—15. p. 247.

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him, 1.—3. And in his superiority to all the holy angels, which is proved by a comparison between him and them in various particulars, in which he has a glorious pre-eminence above them, 4.—14. p. 253.

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The apostle infers from what he had said about the dignity of Christ's person and office, the duty of steadfastly adhering to him and his gospel, 1.—4. re-assumes his argument about Christ's

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The apostle inculcates an humble cautious fear upon the Hebrews, lest any of them should come short of the promised rest through unbelief, 1, 2. Shews the much greater excellence of the heavenly rest, which is proposed in the gospel, than that of the earthly Canaan, which was set before the Israelites under the law, 3,—10. And concludes with the most awakening and encouraging arguments and motives to faith and hope in our approach to God, 11,—16.

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## CHAP. V.

The apostle sets forth the office and duty of a high priest, 1,—4. Shews how abundantly this is answered in Christ's super-eminent call to, and discharge of that office, 5,—10. And reproves the Christian Hebrews for their slothfulness and little progress in the knowledge of the truths of the gospel that were prefigured by the law, 11,—14.

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## CHAP. VI.

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p. 308.

## CHAP. VII.

The apostle returns from his digression to the comparison he had proposed to make between the priesthood of Melchisedec, and of Christ, in which he gives an account of Melchisedec, 1,—3. Shews the excellency of his above the Levitical priesthood, 4,—10. Applies all this to Christ, to set forth the superior dignity and perfection of his priesthood, even to the superseding and disannulling of that which was after the order of Aaron under the law, 11,—24. And draws an inference from this, to the encouragement of the faith and hope of the church, 25,—28.

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## CHAP. VIII.

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## CHAP. X.

The apostle sums up his main argument relating to the insufficiency of all legal sacrifices for taking away sin, 1,—4. And to the necessity and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ for that purpose according to the tenor of the new covenant, which contains the substantial blessings that the law was only the shadow of, 5,—10. And having finished the doctrinal, he enters on the practical part of the epistle, by way of inference from the preceding discourse, from which he draws an argument for holy boldness in the believer's access to God through Jesus Christ, 19,—22. And for steadfastness in the faith, and excitations to mutual love and duty,

duty,

duty, and to frequent assemblies together for religious worship, 23,—25. And then he warns them of the danger of apostasy, 26,—31. Reminds them of their former illumination, and sufferings with patience and spiritual joy, 32,—34. And encourages them to maintain their holy profession to the end of their days, 35,—39. p. 364.

#### CHAP. XI.

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#### CHAP. XII.

The apostle, from the preceding account of the faith of Old Testament-believers under all their difficulties, exhorts the Hebrews to constancy and perseverance in faith and patience, under all their trials and afflictions; and, still further to encourage them thereunto, sets before them the more eminent example of Christ, and the gracious design of God in all the sufferings they endured, 1,—13. Recon-

sends to them peace and holiness, and cautions them against acting a profane part, like Esau, in despising spiritual blessings, 14,—17. And enforces his argument by a consideration of the much greater excellency of the New, than the Old Testament-dispensation, 18,—19. p. 411.

#### CHAP. XIII.

The apostle exhorts to the various duties of brotherly love, hospitality, Christian sympathy, marriage-chastity, contentedness with such worldly circumstances as providence allots to us, and paying due respect to the instructions, example, and memory of faithful pastors, 1,—8. Cautions against being carried away with Jewish doctrines and ceremonies, which are fulfilled in Christ, the gospel High Priest altar and sacrifice, 9,—14. Adds further exhortations to duties, that relate to God, to our neighbour, and them that are set over us in the Lord, 15,—17. Desires the prayers of the Hebrews, and prays for them, 18,—21. Recommends what he had wrote in this epistle to their serious consideration; gives them hopes of his own and Timothy's coming to see them; and concludes with his usual salutations and benediction, 22,—25. p. 435.



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A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Apostle P A U L's Epistle  
T O T H E  
P H I L I P P I A N S,  
In the Form of a P A R A P H R A S E.

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The Preface to the EPISTLE to the PHILIPPIANS.

**P**HILIPPI was a considerable city of *Macedonia*, and the first city of that province, with regard to its situation in the way from *Thrace* to *Macedonia*. (See the note on *Acts* xvi. 11, 12.) It was called *Philippi* from *Philip* of *Macedon*, the father of *Alexander* the Great, who enlarged and fortified it, and gave it that name. And it was famous for the battles that were afterward fought in its neighbouring fields, between *Augustus* and *Mark Anthony* on one side, and *Brutus* and *Cassius* on the other, in which the former were victorious.

The apostle *Paul* was called by a vision to preach the gospel at this city; and God succeeded his labours there to the conversion of *Lydia* and the jailor, *Acts* xvi.; and in process of time, many others, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were brought over to the faith of Christ, insomuch that a famous church was erected, and completely furnished with proper officers, relating to its spiritual and temporal concerns. (*Chap.* i. 1.)

The apostle visited them afterwards again, *Acts* xx. 1,—6. who had a mighty affection for him, and he for them; and, in their abundant love to him, they distinguished themselves above all other churches, by sending seasonable and liberal supplies for his maintenance, when he was at *Thessalonica*; and now again, while he was a prisoner at *Rome*; from whence, about the year of our Lord, say some 60, say others 63, he sent this Epistle to them by the hand of *Epaphroditus*, by whom he had received their generous contributions, together with an account of their tender concern at the troubles that had befallen him, and of their continuing stedfastly in the doctrine of the gospel, notwithstanding the attempts of some *Judaizers* among them, to divide and seduce them: and the chief design of his epistle was to fortify

them still further against these seducers, and encourage them to abide in the faith of Christ, notwithstanding all opposition.

Accordingly he begins his Epistle with hearty thanksgivings to God for the eminent grace bestowed upon them, and for their affectionate regards to himself; expresses his ardent love to them, and great satisfaction in them, and assures them, that his bonds were over-ruled for the furtherance of the gospel; that he was calm and comfortable under them, and was confident, that in a little time he should be released from them, as it proved in the event; and so encourages them to be easy as to him, and to bear up with Christian fortitude under the sufferings which they themselves endured for the sake of Christ and the gospel, *chap. i.* He exhorts them to love and union, public-spiritedness and lowliness of mind, which he recommends to them, by the matchless and surprising example of Christ's humbling himself; and hopes to send *Timothy*, and to come afterwards himself to help them still further in their spiritual affairs, *chap. ii.* Encourages their holy joy in Christ; cautions them against the attempts of *Judaizers*, with whom he compares himself, and shews the happy change that was made upon him by divine grace, and the principles and views, with which he acted in opposition to theirs; and which he proposes to the imitation of the *Philippians*, *chap. iii.* And closes the Epistle with expressions of great tenderness toward them, and toward some particular persons among them, with exhortations to several religious and moral duties, with repeated grateful acknowledgments of their favours to him, and with a doxology, salutations, and his usual benediction, *chap. iv.*

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle Paul inscribes this Epistle to the church and its officers at Philippi, in the salutation of whom Timothy joins with him, ver. 1, 2. Offers up thanksgivings and prayers to God for them, on account of the good work of grace which he was satisfied would be perfected, as in the judgment of charity, and fervour of his love, he hoped this concerning them all, 3,—7. He expresses his affection to them, and pours out an excellent prayer for them, 8,—12. Fortifies them against dejection at his sufferings, which turned to good account, in exciting others to preach Christ, 13,—20. Tells them that he stood prepared for glorifying Christ by life, or death, 21,—26. And exhorts them to all holy conversation, zeal, and constancy in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding all the opposition of their adversaries, 27,—30.*

### TEXT.

PAUL and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the

### PARAPHRASE.

PAUL, and Timothy, who concurs with him in affection and approbation of what he writes, (see the note on 1. Cor. i. 1.) as being joint-servants of Jesus Christ, to minister his gospel, and promote his kingdom and glory; we cordially unite in this address to the

the bishops and deacons :

2 Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

the church of Christ, which ordinarily meets, as the seat of all ordinances at *Philippi*, and consists of visibly, and we trust of really sanctified persons, (*ver. 7.*) through vital union with, and influence from Jesus Christ, the head of the body : And as ye are a completely organized church, furnished with proper officers ; with pastors to inspect, preside and watch over your souls, and your spiritual concerns, and to feed you with knowledge and understanding \* ; and with deacons to take care of your temporal affairs, and especially of your poor, (*Acts. vi. 1,—6.*) according to the order of the gospel, we include these, together with the private members, in what follows, as may be applicable to them respectively ; and particularly do so in our most solemn wishes, that the divine favour, with all its distinguishing effects, and every kind of prosperity, especially in what relates to your souls, may abound toward you from God, our covenant-God and Father, as the spring and fountain of all grace, and from the anointed Lord and Saviour, as the purchaser and distributor of all its blessings to you as well as to us.

3 I think my God upon every remembrance of you.

3 My soul is filled with thanksgiving and praise to God, whose I am, and whom I serve, who put me into the ministry, and made me instrumental to your conversion. I cannot but bless his holy name, from the bottom of my heart, as often as I think of you, and of what God has done for and by you.

4 (Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy,)

5 For your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now ;

4, 5 I find myself sweetly constrained to make mention of you all, in every stated and solemn address to God, through the great Mediator, presenting my earnest and fervent supplications at the throne of grace, for every one of you, with abundance of pleasure, together with the most cheerful thanksgivings, (*ver. 3.*) for your admission, through faith, unto all the rich and glorious privileges, promises, hopes and enjoyments of the gospel-state ; and for your communion with God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, and one with another ; as also for your readily communicating to the support of the gospel, and particularly to me in all my sufferings for its sake ; and for your continuing, with steadfastness and perseverance, in all these excellent things, from the day of your conversion, to this very time, notwithstanding all

#### N O T E.

\* *Bishops or Overseers (ἐπισκοποι)* is of the same import with, and promiscuously used for *elders* or *pastors* of particular churches, as appears from *Acts. xx. 17, 28*, Tit. i. 5,—9, and 1 Pet. v. 1, 2 : And *bishops or elders*, and *deacons*, as far as appears from scripture and primitive antiquity, where the

only different orders of officers is the apostolical churches, though in some of them, occasions do requiring, as in this church at *Philippi*, there were more than one pastor in a church. (See the sermon at the ordination of Mr *Tho. Gibbons*, Oct. 27, 1743.)

all the opposition of your enemies, and the persecutions ye have endured, (*ver.* 28, 29, 30.) And my joy, on this account, greatly abounds;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

6 Being certainly assured, from the testimony of God in his word, from the immortality of the seed of grace, from the unchangeableness of his love and his covenant and from the merit of the dear Redeemer, and the indwelling of his Spirit, that God, who, in the riches of his free favour, has begun to work the best of all works in you \*, even the work of faith, and of heart-changing grace, whereby ye are brought into the fellowship of the gospel, (*ver.* 5.) will undoubtedly, in his faithfulness, carry on, maintain and increase it, by his almighty power, all the days of your lives, till he shall perfect or finish it, at the great day of Christ's coming to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, (2 Thes. i. 10.) I am fully satisfied of this important point, with regard to every one that hath received the grace of God in truth.

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, in as much as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

7 And, as ye have already made such a credible and honourable profession of Christ, and so stedfastly abode in it, and given such evident proofs of your sincerity therein hitherto, I am bound in the judgment of charity, and it is highly-reasonable and becoming me, to suppose, that this good work is really begun in the whole church: And, I am the rather inclined to entertain this charitable hope concerning you all; because, as love thinks no evil, but *hopes all things*, (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7.) ye are exceeding dear to me, and I lay much upon my heart, in my addresses to God on your behalf; forasmuch as ye manifestly appear to be partakers of the same saving grace with myself, and have discovered it in your patiently enduring tribulations, as I myself do, and in your Christian sympathy with me, and concurrent assistances, both in the imprisonment I now suffer for

#### N O T E.

\* A good work is referred by some to their liberality to the apostle; but that was a good work done by them, rather than begun by the operation of God in them; and it seems too mercenary and selfish, for one of the apostle's generous and disinterested spirit, to express such wonderful joy and thankfulness merely, or chiefly on that account; and, in the foregoing verse, he had spoke of their fellowship in the gospel, as the matter of this joy and praise, with reference to which, he speaks of his being confident, that he who had begun this good work, would perform or finish it, (*τελειώσει*) until the day of Jesus Christ. I therefore take it to signify the good work of faith, or of grace in the whole

compass of it, which God had wrought in them: And, as such a comprehensive interpretation gives us the best idea of the apostle's joy and praise on their behalf; so it makes his sentiments more useful and applicable to the church in all ages, than to confine it to the particular circumstance of liberality in the Philippians towards him. The extremely limited sense that some expositors affect to give of this, and many other passages of the New Testament, apparently narrows the rule of faith and practice, and the comfort of the scriptures in their reference to us, as if they were not of such standing and extensive use as I am persuaded the Spirit of God designed them to be.

for the cause of Christ, and in all my labours for the defence of the gospel, against the cavils of its adversaries, and for the confirmation of it, by word and deed, to the confutation of them, and establishment of the saints.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

8 For I can appeal to God, who knows my heart, that I am exceedingly desirous of the spiritual and eternal welfare of every one of you; and that I even long, if it be his will, to see you all again, that I may be instrumental, in his hand, of still further helping forward his good work in you: And he is witness that my ardent desire for, and after you, is not merely from human gratitude, on account of your benevolence to me, or from any carnal or worldly considerations whatsoever; but that it is chiefly of a spiritual nature, for the sake of Christ; because I look upon you as his members, dear to him; and am moved with the inmost bowels of melting affection toward you, under a sense, and in imitation of his tenderest love and pity, wherein he laid down his life, that ye might be saved.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment;

9 And, in the fervor of my affection for you, I earnestly beg of God, that your love to him, and his Son, to me and his people, word and ways, which dwells in you, and already works, and has eminently shown itself in you, as it ought in every church-member, may still more abound and increase with, and under the government of, growing knowledge and experience, as being led into the doctrine of Christ, and settled, after the best manner, in your judgment and spiritual sense, (*ἡ πᾶσι καθαριότης*) as to the whole of its system;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ;

10 That ye may carefully examine, try, and prove, (*ἵνα το δοκιμασῃτε*) and thereupon discern and approve the things that differ in themselves, by way of preference to all others; and that differ in my preaching from what is delivered by false teachers, and, upon trial, prove themselves to be truly valuable and important; that so ye may be found to be genuine Christians, pure in heart and life, free from all hypocrisy and deceit in your holy profession, and uncorrupted in your principles and designs, temper and behaviour, when judged of in the light of the word of God, and tried by that infallible standard of truth and holiness †; and may have a conscience void of offence toward God and man,

and

#### N O T E.

† *Sincere* (*ἡλικρινες*) is a metaphor, taken either from things that are clarified by the heat, or examined and judged of by the light of the sun-beams; and so are found, upon the strictest trial, to be pure and incor-

rupt: And *without offence*, (*ἀνεγκέκλητος*) is a metaphor, taken from persons that go on their way innocently, and without obstruction or stumbling.

and be preserved from every thing, that might wound your own spirits, or be an occasion of stumbling, or falling, to yourselves or others; and *that* not only at certain times, now and then, but with constancy and perseverance all your lives long, as those that expect an awful day of account, and till Christ shall come to judge the world, that ye may be approved of him, as sincere and eminent believers then;

10 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

11 Being all along, and found at that day to be, *trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified*, (Isa. lxi. 3.); even such as, like trees richly laden, greatly abound in the most precious fruits of holiness and obedience of every kind, in their season, (Psal. i. 3.) which are right and equitable in themselves, and due from you, according to the just and holy requirements of the moral law, that unchangeable rule of all righteousness; and which are produced by virtue derived from Christ, (John xv. 5.) and are acceptable to God, and turn to his honour and glory, in and through this great Mediator, (1 Pet. ii. 5. and iv. 11.) which is the supreme end to be aimed at in them all.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

12 But, that ye may not be terrified or discouraged at my sufferings for the sake of Christ, I would fain have you know and consider, my dearly beloved brethren, that the bonds and afflictions which have befallen me at *Rome*, according to divine appointment, have been permitted and over-ruled, by the wise and holy Providence of God, contrary to all outward appearances, and natural expectations, rather to the confirmation and propagation, than to the disadvantage and hinderance of the gospel.

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places.

13 Inasmuch that the hardships and imprisonments, which I am unable to bear with a becoming patience and fortitude of mind, through the gracious presence of Christ with me, are well known among all *Nero's* courtiers, and all the citizens and other people in and round about *Rome*, to be, not for any crime that I have been guilty of, but merely for the sake of Christ, which is matter of glory rather than shame, and hath proved the happy occasion of many people's inquiring after him, and believing in him; among which are some of *Cæsar's* household, (Phil. iv. 22.)

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

14 And, through the influence of divine grace, many brethren in the faith of Christ, and in the work of the ministry, being fully satisfied of the justice and excellence of my cause, and of the power of the Lord Jesus, which has visibly supported and comforted me under all my troubles, and given success to his word, have

have thereupon taken courage, and been more abundantly animated and emboldened to preach the gospel with a greater freedom and liberty of spirit than they ever were before, without being terrified by the fear of any sufferings that might come upon them for it.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good-will.

15 There are some indeed of the *judaeizing* Christians, that preach up Jesus as the true Messiah, and several important doctrines of salvation by him, even from a spirit of envy at my reputation and success, in carrying the gospel to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, and insisting on justification through faith in Christ alone, without the works of the law \*; and they do this with a spirit of contention and opposition to me, that they may sink my credit and authority, and advance their own in the church; but there are others, that preach the pure doctrines of Christ, in their full extent, with all freedom and delight, even from an hearty affection to him and his gospel, to immortal souls, and to me his apostle.

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

16 The first of this sort of preachers that set forth Christ in their ministrations, by way of envy and strife, do it, not (*αἷμα*) from a sincere desire of propagating the truth as it is in Jesus, and of glorifying him; nor from a hearty concern to embrace him themselves, and recommend him to others; but rather from a vain imagination that they shall thereby supplant, distress, and grieve me, and so increase the weight of my present afflictions; and that they shall be a means of promoting the continuance of my bonds, and, perhaps, of making them issue in my martyrdom, through the umbrage that the government may take at these contentious ways of preaching the word, and at the divisions which they may foment, by that means among the professors of Christ.

17 But

#### N O T E.

\* It is generally, and with great probability supposed, that they, who preached Christ of envy and strife, were *Jewish* converts, that set themselves against the apostle Paul, and, on all occasions, did what they could to hinder his success, ran him down, and promote his troubles of every kind: But I cannot think, that, on this occasion, they preached a quite different gospel from the apostle's, according to their own corrupt *judaeizing* notions: For he, who so constantly and zealously declaimed against this, as another gospel, for which, he that brought it was to be deemed accursed, (Gal. i. 8, 9.) would scarce have called it *preaching Christ*, as he does in this and some following verses; much less would have rejected it, as he says he did

and would I, ver. 18. I therefore rather apprehend that they hypocritically preached the true gospel of Christ, farther than they honestly could upon their own principles, concealing their sentiments about some of its articles, that they might draw off the affections of the apostle's friends from him to themselves, and might sow strife and divisions among them, and thereby exasperate the government against him and his adherents. This is what he calls preaching Christ *insincerely and in pretence*, in opposition to others who preached him in *love*, and in *truth or uprightness*. But some think that they fully preached the true gospel, though with insincerity and bad views.

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

17 But the other sort of preachers, that are acted by a true spirit of love to Christ and souls, and to his cause and me in preaching him, do it as, not merely imagining \*, but as being *well satisfied*, on the surest grounds, that I am appointed, and set in the church, by a divine commission, for maintaining, vindicating, and defending the true gospel of Christ; and that I now lie in bonds in order to my making an apology for it, whenever I shall be brought upon my trial.

18 What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

18 But, if contrary views induce these two parties to take occasion to preach Christ, what is this to me? Shall I return envy for envy, or be vexed on this account, as some of them suppose I would? No, though I pity them that are influenced to it, by unworthy motives, and heartily detest their insincerity; yet, which way soever the thing itself be done, whether with dissimulation, under a sham pretext of zeal for Christ and the gospel, and the welfare of souls; or with sincerity and uprightness, to promote his interest and glory, and their good, *the fact* is, that Christ is made known by these means at Rome, and round about it: And, as this is in itself matter of great joy, I heartily do; yea, and, by the grace of God, will rejoice in it, whatsoever any of them may think to the contrary; and how much soever they may design thereby to strike at my character, or even at my liberty and life itself.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

19 For I am persuaded in an humble dependence upon the promises of God, yea, am fully assured, by the revelation of the Spirit, that even the worst designs of my adversaries, in their preaching the gospel to distress me, shall be over-ruled by the good Providence of God, contrary to their hopes, for my enlargement and deliverance from my bonds, that I may be at liberty to preach the gospel without restraint, (ver. 25. †); and

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle speaks of his enemies, ver. 16. as only (*οἰκτιροί*) *supposing*, (in which they were deceived) that they should add affliction to his bonds; but in opposition therunto, he here speaks of faithful ministers, as *knowing*, (*εἰσφορέα*) or being assured, on the strongest evidence, that he was set for the defence of the gospel; which may take in, both his being appointed to it in the discharge of his office, and his lying in bonds, in order to his making a public apology (*ἀπολογία*) for it, in answer to his accusers: For the word (*κίχηται*) here rendered *set*, as it also is in Luke ii. 3, 4. signifies likewise to be laid, and is so translated, Mat. xii. 10. and Luke xxiii. 53.

† *Spiritual and eternal*, as well as *temporal salvation*, are taken into the paraphrase; because the supply of the Spirit of Christ, thro' which the apostle was satisfied the design of his enemies would turn to his salvation, seems, most plainly, to refer to this sort of salvation, which he knew he, by that means, should be partaker of, though his enemies would have prevented it by forcing him, if possible, through their evil practices against him, to give up and renounce the gospel: For the supply of the Spirit relates, not so much to *temporal*, as to *spiritual and eternal* salvation, over and above all temporal deliverances which were to be expected rather, as the effect of the operations of *providence* for



and that all their malicious attempts against me shall be sanctified to my own soul's benefit, as well as the good of others, and made subservient, instead of being obstructive, to my eternal salvation; as, by means of them, I shall be helped forward to it, and fitted for it with the brighter glory, (2 Cor. iv. 17.) through the prayers which ye are daily putting up, and I desire may still be continued for me; and through the rich communications of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, whereby, in answer to your prayers, I am enabled to make a good improvement of all these dispensations, to his glory, the advantage of others, and the comfort of my own soul.

20 According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

20 This I am thoroughly satisfied will be the happy event, according to what I firmly expect, and vehemently desire; namely, that, whatsoever my adversaries may design, or do against me; yet I shall never be suffered, in any circumstance of things, to be ashamed of Christ and his gospel, nor of my hope in him; but shall be enabled to go on in his work with all liberty of spirit and undaunted courage; (*παρρησια*) and that as I always, through grace, have hitherto in this way glorified the name of my great Lord and Master ever since he converted me and called me to the apostleship; so both now, and from this time forward, Christ shall be glorified, and the power of his grace toward me shall be eminently exalted, in this my frail mortal body, whether it be by a patient continuance under sufferings, and a further publication and defence of the gospel, and by a holy life and conversation during my abode in it; or by my suffering martyrdom, and bravely owning and honouring him in the most cruel and violent death that can be inflicted upon me for his sake.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

21 For Christ is my gain in living and dying, as he is my all, and lives in me; and as his interest and glory are the delightful end I pursue in both, that I may bring honour to his name, and gain over souls to him by preaching the gospel while I live, and by sealing my testimony to him with my blood, when I come to die\*; which will also be to my own unspeakable gain in

#### N O T E S.

for him, than from a supply of the spirit of Christ to him; and in his enlargement upon this subject, in some following verses, he speaks of his gain in death, and of the rich advantage of his being with Christ, as the object of his earnest desire and hope, ver. 23, 24.

\* I have considered these words (*ἐπεὶ τοι ὁ Χριστός καὶ τὸ ἀποθνήσκειν κέρδος*) according to the different renderings that have been

given of them, either as they stand in our translation, or as signifying, *Christ is my gain in living and dying*; or, *to me living and dying Christ is gain*: But they seem to include gain to the apostle himself, as well as to the honour of Christ, at death; because in the next verse, which may be considered as an explication and enlargement of his thoughts in this, he intimates, that were he to live in

in the complete salvation which I hope for through him, (*ver. 19.*)

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not;

23 For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better;

24 Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

25 And, having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your

22 But if it should please God to lengthen out my days in mortal flesh, to preach and suffer for the gospel the great fruit of my laborious and painful services, even all that I think worth living for, is to promote the honour and interest of Christ, which in the end will also turn to my own account; and therefore, were it to be left to my determination, I am at a loss to know whether, upon the whole, I should choose life or death.

23 For I am greatly straitened and pressed, in my own thoughts, between two things, that engage my serious concern; having, on one hand, an earnest desire to be loosed from the incumbrance, weakness, and imperfections, natural and moral, of this corruptible frail body, and to be released by a departure of my immortal soul from it, that I may be with Christ, in his immediate presence, to behold his glory, which I shall do as soon as ever my soul is absent from the body †; (*2 Cor. v. 6.*) and which, far exceeding all thought or expression, is incomparably better for myself, than any condition in the present life can possibly be.

24 But (*h*) there is another thing that, on the contrary, my heart is so much set upon, as to make me desirous, if it so please God, of continuing some time longer in this present mortal body, to exercise the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus; and that is, because, as I verily believe, (*ver. 25.*) this is most for your spiritual benefit, considering the enemies, temptations and dangers that surround you, and the help ye need against them; and therefore I am willing to live for public service, even in this troublesome world, how much soever it may be my own personal loss, to be kept all that while out of heaven.

25 And being in great hopes that this noble end of my living in the body would be answered, by the blessing of God on my labours, I am persuaded in my own mind, by intimations of the Spirit, that my life shall

still

#### N O T E S.

the flesh, his honouring Christ would be the fruit of his labour; but were he to die, this would still be far better for himself; and therefore he was in a strait what to choose.

† If the soul were to sleep, or be in a state of insensibility at death, till the general resurrection of the body, the apostle could have hoped for no more advantage by dying *soon*, than if he were to have lived many years longer; and consequently could

have been in no strait between a desire of living here for the service of Christ, or of dying, to enjoy the happiness of being with him in his glory; nor could he have imagined, in this view of things, that it would have been exceedingly far better (*καλλὴ μάλιστα χριστον*) for himself to die out of hand, than to live longer on earth. (See the note on *2 Cor. v. 1.*)

your furtherance  
and joy of faith:

still be preserved for a while, notwithstanding the threatening aspect of my present suffering circumstances; and that I shall have an opportunity of seeing and ministering to, and of continuing and conversing for some time with you, as well as with other churches of the faints, for promoting your spiritual edification in light and grace, comfort and holiness; and particularly for the further helping of your faith, through the attending power of the Holy Ghost, that ye may be *filled with all joy and peace in believing*, (Rom. xv. 13.)

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

26 That so your delightful glorying (*καυχουμαι*) in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour, may be much greater, on account of my being restored to you, than ever it has been hitherto, or than probably it ever would be, were I never to be set at liberty, and come to you again; and may be abundantly increasing yet more and more, thro' the confirmation which your faith will receive by my wonderful deliverance from imprisonment, and by means of the benefit which ye may have through my ministrations, when I return to you.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel;

27 In the mean while, there is one thing that I would earnestly recommend to you, and insist upon, as necessary to evidence the truth of your faith, and to promote the peace of your own souls, and my comfort in you; which is, that (*κατασκευαστε*) your traffic and behaviour in the world, and one towards another, be answerable to your holy citizenship, and such as is worthy your Christian-state and character, and suitable to the directions, and ornamental to the principles, privileges, and obligations, and to your holy profession of the gospel, which has Christ for its glorious author and chief subject; so that whether, when I may have opportunity of coming to see you again; or whether, while by providence I am detained from you, I may hear from yourselves, or others, a comfortable account of the true state of things among you, as to your spiritual concerns; and particularly that, notwithstanding all the subtle and furious attempts of your adversaries, ye persevere and abide firm and unshaken, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, in one and the same evangelical spirit of liberty, truth, and love; and unite, as with one heart and soul, and concur in vigorous efforts, like wrestlers, against all opposition, (*αγωνιζετε*) according to your respective stations and abilities, for preserving, propagating, and defending the pure, uncorrupted, and important doctrines of faith, as delivered in the gospel, which ye have received of me; and for promoting the grace of faith in one another, that it may be in lively exercise,

exercise, and stedfastly professed, to the glory of Christ, and the good of your own and others souls.

18 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

28 And I should rejoice greatly to hear, that, how artful, or cruel and outrageous soever the enemies may be, who set themselves against your faith, and the prosperity and salvation of your souls, ye behave with Christian fortitude, and are by no means affrighted, or discouraged at their opposition to you and the gospel, which carries indeed a sad preface to them, as a plain mark of their being in the way to, and in the nearest danger of eternal destruction; and 'tis a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them, \* while they look upon you, as a people obstinately bent upon your own ruin: But unto you, that are persecuted for the sake of Christ, and bear it with faith and patience, 'tis in reality an evident token of eternal salvation, and that not of yourselves, but of God, as his free gift, who calls you to the trial, and is able, faithful, and willing to stand by you in it, and carry you through it, and crown you with everlasting life at the end of it. (See *Mat. v. 10, 11, 12.*)

29 For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

29 For 'tis a distinguishing honour, which God graciously puts upon you, on account of the merit of Christ; and, though flesh and sense judge otherwise, it really is, and ought to be esteemed matter of great joy; (*James i. 2.*) that ye should not only be enabled to trust in him, and continue so to do, to the saving of your souls; but that ye should also be helped, patiently to endure persecutions for him, from a principle of faith, and love to him, and for his glory here, that ye may be glorified with him in a more illustrious manner hereafter. (See *Rom. viii. 17.*)

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

30 And still further to reconcile you to, and keep you from fainting under those sufferings for Christ, which do, or may befall you in this world, ye would do well to consider, that they are only the same sort of combat, (*αγώνα*) which ye have formerly seen me violently exercised with, and yet enabled, through grace, to sustain with holy fortitude and patience, for the same glorious cause, among yourselves at *Philippi*, (*Acts xvi. 19,—24.*); and which ye now hear I am sorely conflicting with, under my present bonds and imprisonment at *Rome*.

#### N O T E.

\* Which is an evident token of perdition, is supposed by some to mean, that the Jewish opposers accounted the believing Gentiles to be obdurate and incorrigible, and abandoned of God to everlasting perdition. I have

glanced at this sense, though I take the other to be less strained, and full as well, or better suited to the apostle's design, in fortifying the *Philippians* against being terrified by their adversaries.

## RECOLLECTIONS.

How well are those churches furnished with all needful officers that have faithful pastors and deacons, to take care of their spiritual and temporal concerns ! And with what cordial and devout affection should we wish and pray, that all the blessings of grace and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, may be multiplied to them and their officers ! They are charitably supposed to be saints in Christ ; and it is matter of great thankfulness to God, that they are admitted to, and continue in the fellowship of the gospel, and bear the evident traces of that good work of grace which we may be confident its great Author will carry on, till it be perfected at the coming of Jesus Christ. And O how desirable is it, that sincerity, light, and love, and an inoffensive deportment, and high approbation of spiritual things, together with the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God, should unitedly increase and abound in us ! The preaching of Christ is his appointed means of promoting these important ends, as well as of the conversion of sinners ; and he will own it as his ordinance, though some may be influenced by unworthy, hypocritical, envious, and contentious views, to engage in that sacred office. But how amiable is it, when it is discharged with fidelity, and with sincere affection to Christ, to his servants, people, and cause ! However, if Christ be really preached according to the truth of the gospel, whether from good or bad motives, we ought to rejoice in the thing itself : And it discovers a most excellent spirit when we are enabled so to do, even while we apprehend it is designed to lessen our own personal credit, comfort, and usefulness : But, whatever others may intend, God will over-rule the sufferings of his faithful servants, for the defence and furtherance of the gospel ; for encouraging some to appear openly in the cause of Christ ; and for emboldening their own faith and hope, and helping forward their own salvation, through the prayers of his people, and the supply of his Spirit. And what a happy strait is it for them not to know whether they shall chuse life, through their earnest concern to glorify Christ in their services and sufferings, for the edification of the church ; or shall chuse death, through their vehement desire to go immediately to Christ, which they assuredly know is best of all for themselves ! What an honour is it to suffer with a right spirit for the sake of Christ ! And how should believers esteem this, as well as faith itself, to be rather a gift of grace, on account of his merit, than to be thought of with terror ! Only it behoves them to take care, that, by the grace of God, their conversation be holy, as becomes the gospel of Christ, and that they stand fast with one mind and heart, striving together, with fervent zeal, for the faith once delivered to the saints, whatsoever the consequence may be, as to this world. And O how near do they, and their spiritual affairs, lye to the hearts of their good ministers ! They are continually mindful of them in their prayers ; they heartily bless God for them, as partakers of grace with themselves ; they rejoice in their prosperity ; and their tenderest affectionate desire (as they can appeal to God) is toward them, that they may enjoy their company and communion, and may be helpful to them for their support under troubles, and for their furtherance and joy of faith.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle exhorts the Philippians to a harmonious, kind, and humble spirit and behaviour, by various moving arguments, and particularly by the example of Christ, 1,—11. To diligence in the affairs of their salvation, in consideration of God's working in them, 12, 13. To be exemplary and instructive to the world, and a comfort to himself, 14,—18. And he assures them of his desire, hope, and purpose of making them a visit ; and, in the mean while, of sending to them Timothy*  
and

and Epaphroditus, both of which he recommends to their kind and honourable regards, 19,—30.

## TEXT.

IF there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;

## PARAPHRASE.

AS I have expressed my willingness to abide in the flesh for your furtherance and joy of faith, (*chap. xi. 25.*) I would therefore earnestly press upon you the important things before recommended, (*chap. i. 27.*) by several moving considerations, as follow, if there be any authority in my exhortation, (*παρακαλιω*) as delivered to you in the name of Christ; or any argument to be drawn from the excellency of that consolation which ye have in him, and derive from him; or if ye would comfort me under my present tribulations for Christ: If any obligation arises from a joyous sense of his love, and of the love of God in him to you; or from the pleasure of your own love to him, and of your mutual Christian love one to another; or if ye would have in yourselves, and give me the comfort of my love to you, and of yours to me: If there be any inducement from a consideration of that holy communion, that ye have, together with myself, in the special influences, gifts, graces, and communications of the Holy Spirit, which also gives you a *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, (1 John i. 3.) or from a consideration of your spiritual fellowship one with another, as members of the same body, of which Christ is the head; if there be any force in a reflection on the most tender and affectionate dispositions which are in the heart of God, and have discovered themselves, through Christ, with the kindest compassion towards you, or which he has wrought, by his Spirit in you towards one another, and me, his prisoner in bonds. If, I say, there be any reality, worth, pleasure, obligation, or endearment in these things, as there certainly is; and if, as I trust, ye yourselves have experienced them in your own souls;

1 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

2 Let these excite and engage you to fill up the measure of that satisfaction and joy which ye have already begun to give me; the joy I mean is, that ye be entirely united with me, and with one another, in mind and heart, and *that* particularly in the following things; that ye, as Christians, be knit together in sincere love and affection to Christ, and me his servant, as I am to you, and in brotherly love one to another; that ye unanimously agree to join with me, in pursuing one and the same design, for promoting the interest of Christ, the purity of the gospel, and your mutual edification;

and

and that ye be all of the same judgment, and of \* the same relish with myself, as to the great doctrines of the Christian faith in opposition to all *judaizing* errors.

3 Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

3 Take heed that nothing be said or done among you, from a litigious or ostentatious temper, which delights in opposition to others, and applause to itself; but let every thing be managed in your church-assemblies, and in all your conversation and behaviour, with such an humble frame of spirit, as shall dispose all and every one of you to entertain a modest and mean opinion of their own attainments †, and to be ready to condescend to persons of the lowest degree; as also to think and speak better of others that walk becoming their profession, than of themselves, as observing, and being duly affected with a sense of their own failings, and casting a mantle of love upon the defects of other Christians, whose hearts, for aught they know, may be better, and more approved of God, than their own.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

4 In order to your attaining this excellent disposition, let every one of you take heed of a narrow selfish spirit, of magnifying his own endowments, or of aiming at (*ὑποκρίσιν*) his own honour, ease, and secular interests, as though this were the chief mark and scope of his endeavours and conduct; but let every one, as acted by a generous public spirit, think himself bound in duty, not, like a busy body, to meddle with other people's matters, but, in his own proper sphere, to consult and pursue those things that make for their edification and peace; comfort and advantage, both in temporal and spiritual affairs.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was

5 For (*ὑπερ*) in opposition to strife, vain-glory and self-

#### N O T E S.

\* *Be like-minded (ἡ αὐτὴ ἐκκίνησις) and be of one mind (ἡ ἑνὴ ἐκκίνησις)* express just the same idea, if we take them separately, and apart by themselves: But, as it cannot be thought that the apostle was guilty of such a needless tautology, as taking them in the same sense and latitude imports, I apprehend the easiest way of freeing him from it, is to consider *like-minded* as a general term, and the three following expressions as explanatory of the particulars he included in it, namely, as *having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind*; and, it seems to me, that by the last of these, he intended an agreement in sentiments as to the doctrines of the gospel, because he is here enforcing what he had said, chap. i. 27. about their *standing fast in one spirit, in one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel*. This preserves a proper distinction in the sense of all these words.

† Though Christians of eminent gifts and graces may, and cannot but account their attainments to be superior to others of the lowest class, as the apostle speaks of his own gifts and labours; yet, like him, they ought to be humble in ascribing nothing to themselves, but all to the grace of God, 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. and 2 Cor. xii. 11. And, with respect to true religion, charity should teach them to hope, that there may be something more excellent, and less offensive to God in the hearts of other believers, than they find in their own, who, on one account or another, are apt to think their own worse than others; because, the more they know themselves, the more they see the treachery and vileness of their own, than it is possible for them to see of the hearts of others, whose conversation is such as becomes the gospel of Christ.

was also in Christ Jesus;

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

self-seeking, the same spirit of meekness, humility, and love ought to prevail in you, which was so eminently conspicuous, and so perfectly exemplified in our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

6 Who, being possessed of the divine nature \*, and of all its essential perfections, as the Son of God, and as the *brightness of the Father's glory, and express image of his person*, (Heb. i. 3.); and so really, and in the strictest sense, God, in the true and proper form of deity, did not count it an usurpation, injury, or wrong, or any act of rapine in him, to claim an equality of nature with God the Father; he and the Father being *essentially One*, though *personally distinct*. (John x. 30.)

7 Nevertheless (*κατα*) he was pleased, by a wonderful act of condescension, so far to disrobe, and, as it were, empty himself, of the bright appearance of his divine majesty and glory, as not to make a pompous shew of them; but, in great measure, to conceal them from the observation of men, while, in themselves they continued to be really and essentially the same as ever, and *all the fulness of the Godhead dwell substantially in him*: (Col. ii. 9.) And he voluntarily assumed human nature into personal union with himself, in so low and mean a condition, as therein to become his Father's servant, living and acting, bleeding and dying, according to his commandment, (John x. 18.) and as even to act the part of a servant towards his disciples, (Luke xii. 37.) and go through the most painful, humbling, and difficult services for their redemption and salvation; and he was so truly and properly man, as to be *made like unto his brethren*, of human nature, in *all things, sin only excepted*, (Heb. ii. 17. and iv. 15.)

8 And when he was found in the common form and condition of man, as tho' he had been nothing more, he submitted himself to the lowest degree of service and sufferings; and went into a course of the most humble obedience, as to his parents and magistrates, in all lawful things, so to his heavenly Father, as his servant, to answer all the demands of his holy law, both in fulfilling its precepts, and suffering its curse; and this obedience

#### N O T E.

\* The form of God is opposed to the form of a servant in the next verse; and, as the form of a servant, which Christ is there said to have taken upon him, is meant of his being really a servant in his assumed human nature, with reference to which, it is added, that he was *made in the likeness of men*, the plain meaning of which is, that he was really man; so, the form of God, which he was

originally in, must, in all reason, mean, that he was, in his prior nature, as *truly and properly God*, as he was in his human nature man and a servant; and therefore it might well be said, that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, as I think this passage is justly rendered. (See this sense of it vindicated in my sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, page 21.)



obedience he paid even unto death, and all along, till he came to die, yea, and in his dying, (*John* x. 18.) not an ordinary death, but the ignominious, painful, and accursed death of the cross, to show that he stood in the place of transgressors, who were under the curse of the law, and that he came to redeem them from it, by bearing it for them, (*Gal.* iii. 13.)

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

9 And, having fulfilled his work of redemption in this humble, obediential and suffering manner, God his Father, as a reward of all this, according to its deserts, and his covenant-agreement, (*Isa.* liii. 9,—11.) has gloriously exalted him, not by advancing him to a state of greater essential happiness, perfection, or glory, than he had before, as God, which admits of no addition; but by raising him, as man, from the dead, receiving him up to glory, and setting him at his own right hand, and giving him universal dominion, as mediator; and so he illustriously manifested this divine person to be as great and glorious as he always was in himself: And to recommend him by the most endearing motives to our acknowledgment of him as such, he has granted him, in his office-capacity, as his incarnate Son, a new title of authority and honour, incomparably superior to any other name, dignity, or authority whatsoever, among angels or men; yea too great for any mere creature to wear, or be worthy of, even the name of *the Saviour*, and the constituted *Lord* of all, (*ver.* 10. 11.) And he has done this,

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

10 To the end that (*ver.*) in token of the religious honours which are due to the exalted Saviour, every one should bow the knee, not at barely pronouncing the word *Jesus*, nor merely in a literal sense, in which the angels in heaven, that are to bow before him, have no knees; but in paying such solemn homage, adoration, and worship to this glorious and divine person, whose name is *Jesus*; and in being so entirely subject to him, (see the note on *Rom.* xiv. 11.) as is signified by bowing the knee, as well as by other expressions of it: and is to be paid to him by all ranks of intelligent creatures, whether they be saints or angels in heaven, or such men as are living upon earth, or as are dead and buried under the earth, when they shall rise again, and appear at his tribunal; then they, and all the wicked on earth, and all the devils in hell, shall either willingly or by constraint, bow to him, as the great Judge of all.

11 And that every tongue should

11 And he is thus highly exalted, that the tongue of every one, of all nations and languages, should

should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

either cheerfully own, and celebrate the praises of his universal dominion; or be forced to acknowledge, whether they would or not, that he, the anointed Saviour, is in his office-capacity, and exalted state, the great Head, Lord, and Ruler over all, and the universal Judge at the last day, to the glory of God the Father, whose honour it is to have always had such a divine Son, as is worthy of so high a commission, (*John* v. 23. and *1 John* ii. 23.) and who, in infinite wisdom, hath appointed his incarnate person to all this dignity, for the glory of his own name, *John* xvii. 1, 2.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

12 Since therefore the duties of humility, love, and kindness (*ver.* 2,—4.) are recommended in so lively and affecting a manner, by the matchless example of our Lord himself; let this animate you, my dear brethren, to a noble imitation of him therein; and since, from the time of your conversion, ye have, all along, shown an obediential submission to his commands, and to his authority in me, not only out of regard to my presence, while I was personally among you to observe, assist, admonish, and encourage you; but now, more especially to prove the sincerity of your love, while ye are surrounded with seducers, and are not under my immediate inspection and instruction, through my absence from you; I, in reflection upon this, intreat you, with the greater confidence in your obedience, to be vigorously active, under divine influence, in promoting the salvation of one another, (see the note on *Eph.* iv. 32.) and to go forward, and abound in a diligent exercise and practice of the forementioned, and all other graces and duties that are necessary, in the nature of things, and by the appointment of God, for the final accomplishment of that salvation, which is already your own, by the gift of the Father, the purchase of the Son, and the application and earnest of the Spirit; And I beseech you to labour in this manner about your own salvation, every one personally for himself, not with a servile, distrustful, and desponding fear, but with a holy, filial, and awful reverence of the Divine Majesty, and a cautious fear of sinning against, and thereby offending and dishonouring him, (*Psal.* ii. 11. and *1 Pet.* i. 17.) and with humble dread of doing any thing to provoke his frowns and displeasure, the hidings of his face, the withdrawings of his assistance, and the chastisements of his rod, in opposition to self-confidence and carnal security, with regard to an affair of such infinite importance.

13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

13 For, to encourage your utmost diligence herein, on one hand, and to guard you against pride and carnal security; on the other, remember that the gracious and holy God, who has begun his good work in your souls, (*ver. 11*) continues to carry it on; with internal virtue and powerful energy, till it be perfected, (*chap. i. 6.*) as it is he, that excites, inclines, and determines your will, in a way consistent with the truest liberty of a rational creature, and enables you to perform the things that relate to your salvation; and does this, not for any desert in yourselves to move him to it, but merely of his own free and sovereign grace, which he exerts with the greatest pleasure and delight, *Mat. xi. 26.* and *Mica vii. 18.*) \* and by which he works in you both to choose, and do every thing that is good in the use of proper means, with freedom and cheerfulness.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

14 In dependence therefore upon, and compliance with his gracious operations in you, take special heed, that, according to what has been suggested, (*ver. 3.*) ye, in the whole of your conduct, avoid all discontent at the prosperity of others, or at the disposals of providence toward yourselves; and all animosities and wrangling disputations one against another; and disputings against the things which God enjoins upon you, or which ye may be called to suffer for Christ's sake.

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

15 That ye may be in reality, and appear to yourselves and others to be, unreplicable and inoffensive in your temper and conversation, and sincere in your dealings with both God and man; as becomes the children of your heavenly Father, to distinguish you from the children of the devil; that there may be no just occasion of complaint or accusation against you, for any irregularity in your walk, nor any room for the most captious adversary to revile and censure you, while ye live in the midst of a generation of Jews and Gentiles,

#### N O T E.

\* The word *His*, not being in the Greek, some suppose that *good pleasure* relates, not to the manner with which God works in us, but with which *believers* do, as well as will, under his workings; and so may signify that the effect of his working in us is *our* willing, and doing with freedom and delight, as serving the Lord with *good-will*, under the influence of his Spirit and grace, according to the apostle's use of this word, (*chap. i. 15.*) And this may be a very good sense of the phrase, while we consider God as working all this in us, and exciting and influencing us to it by his Spirit. But, I rather think, that *good pleasure* refers to the

way and manner of God's working in us, than to the way and manner of our willing and acting towards him, in things that relate to our salvation: For *our doing with good pleasure*, is much the same with *our willing to do it*; and this word (*voluntas*) as far as I find, is never used to express *our* *actings* about our own salvation; but is frequently used with reference to God, and his way and manner of acting about it, and is commonly rendered *his good pleasure*, or *good will*, or *that which seems good to him*, as in *Matth. xi. 25, 26.* *Luke ii. 14.* and *xii. 31.* *Ephes. i. 5, 9.* and *a Thess. i. 12.*

*Gentiles*, that are exceedingly corrupt and depraved in their minds and manners, like persons bent and warped from the strait rule of righteousness, perverse in heart, and turned aside from the right ways of the Lord; among whom ye, as Christians, and a church of Christ, are set up, ought to be, and in great measure are, as shining lights, and illustrious examples, for the direction, conviction, and imitation of the men of this world, that they, *seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven*: (Mat. v. 16.)

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

16 Ye herein holding fast (ἑκκαθίστασθε) with perseverance; and holding up to all around you, with evidence and recommendation, Christ himself, who is our life; see Col. iii. 4. and 1 John i. 1.) and the glorious doctrine of eternal life, in all its purity and excellence, as it reveals and shews the way of obtaining it through him, and is the power of God to the salvation of every one that believes, (Rom. i. 16.) this I am greatly concerned for, that according to my hope, I may rejoice and glory in your steadfastness and usefulness here, and in your complete salvation hereafter, when we shall appear together in the presence of Christ, at his coming to judge the world in the great day of account, (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) as finding then, that all my strivings, pains, and labours for, and with you, in the course of my ministry, have not been fruitless and ineffectual: but by the grace of God, have answered their desired end, to his glory and your everlasting happiness.

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

17 Yea, and such is my love to you, that I not only hope, and rejoice in the hope of this happy fruit of my labours among you; but if (ἀλλ' ἂν καὶ σπένδομαι) in pursuit of them, the Providence of God should so order it, that I, his prisoner, must not only undergo great sufferings, but even lay down my life to seal my testimony with my blood, and to be poured out, like the oil and wine on the meat and drink-offerings, (Exod. xxix. 40. and Lev. ii. 1.) to complete the sacrifices under the law, in ministering before the Lord, (ἀνθυψία); if this should befall me, for the further confirmation of your faith and believing *Gentiles*, who are offered up as an acceptable sacrifice to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, (Rom. xv. 16.) I am so far from being troubled at it, that now, in the foresight of it, I do, and then shall rejoice in it; and (συγχαίρω) I congratulate you all, upon finishing my work and days in a manner so honourable to Christ, and so richly to your advantage.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy

18 And, in return, I beg of you, that on the same account, in case ye should hear of my martyrdom, ye would

joy and rejoice with me.

would rejoice and congratulate me, (*συχαίετε με*) on the honour of my dying in such a way, as shall bear the most noble testimony to the Lord Jesus, and to his gospel, and shall be to the farther encouragement and establishment of your faith in him.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

19 But, notwithstanding all that I have said about my willingness to die for these great purposes, I am apprehensive that the time for it is not yet come; and I humbly hope and trust in the providential care and gracious kindness of the Lord Jesus, who is highly exalted, and has a name above every name, (*ver. 9.*) and has the government of the church and the world upon his shoulders, (*Isa. ix. 6.*) that my circumstances will soon be in such a situation, as to admit of my sparing the beloved Timothy, and sending him, according to my present purpose, to see how matters go with you, and help you in your spiritual concerns, that I may have the greatest satisfaction and pleasure, according to my hopes, when I shall hear from him, that the work of the Lord prospers among you, and that the judaizing teachers have not been able, by all their subtilties and terrors, to pervert or shake you.

20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

20 The reason of my designing to send him is, because I have no Christian-brother with me, (*ισοψυχον*) that is equal in excellency of temper with him, or that is like-affected toward you; and that, with regard to doctrine, ministrations and behaviour, walks in the same spirit, and in the same steps with myself, as he does, who sincerely, and with the most genuine affection, (*πυστος*) like that which a parent naturally has for his children, will lay your concerns to heart, and carefully study to promote your establishment, edification, and increase with all the increases of God.

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

21 For the generality of the other brethren\*, that remain with me, are too selfish and pusillanimous, and rather solicitous about their own temporal ease, honour, and safety, than willing to expose themselves to such fatigues, dangers and reproaches, as I met with at Philippi, (*Acts xvi. 19,—24.*) and as they might possibly be called to suffer more, in promoting the interest,

cause,

#### N O T E.

\* All here cannot mean absolutely and universally every one of the Christian-ministers and brethren, as if none of them had any concern for the interest and glory of Christ: For the apostle speaks honourably of Epaphroditus, (*ver. 25.*) and tells us, chap. i. 14. that "many of the brethren," waxing confident by his bonds, were "much more bold to speak the word without fear;" but, perhaps, the best of them

were gone to other places, and the greatest part of them, that remained with the apostle, were, compared with Timothy, more influenced by worldly conveniences and advantages, than by a zealous concern to promote the interest of Christ, particularly at Philippi, where it might cost them more abundant trouble, than at some other places in which they might hope to be useful.

cause, and glory of our great Lord and Saviour, and the welfare of his church there, than in some other places.

21 But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the Father he hath served with me in the gospel.

22 But ye have had good trial and proof, (*ROMANS*) and an experimental knowledge of *Timothy's* eminent qualifications, faithfulness, courage, and zeal: Ye have seen how, when we were together among you, (*AETS* xvi. 1,—13.) he engaged, in the face of all hazard and opposition, with me, as a fellow-labourer, in preaching and propagating the gospel; and I assure you he always, like me, has been seeking, not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved, (*1 Cor.* x. 33.); he has been willing to go wherever I should send him, and to lay himself out in the service of Christ, according to my directions, with all the affection and cheerfulness, respect and duty of a son to his father; he being indeed my own son in the faith, (*1 Tim.* i. 2.) and of the same spirit with me.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

23 I have therefore fixed upon this excellent and approved young man, and hope I shall be able to send him to you in a very little time, without further delay, after I shall have taken my trial at *Cæsar's* bar, (*AETS* xxviii. 19.) which I daily expect to be called to; and then the fact will prove whether I am to be discharged or not.

24 But I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly.

24 But though the trial is not yet over, I have an humble confidence in the Lord Jesus, whose I am, and whom I serve, and for whose sake I am now in bonds; that by his over-ruling providence, and gracious appearance for me, I shall be acquitted from the malicious accusations of mine enemies, and set at liberty; and that thereupon I myself may likewise have an opportunity, ere long, of paying you a visit, according to my earnest desire of seeing you, and rejoicing with you.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you *Epaphroditus*, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that minneth to my wants.

25 Nevertheless, as I cannot come immediately myself, and *Timothy* cannot yet be spared, I in the mean while thought it proper, and needful for your edification and comfort, and for giving you a present pledge of my affectionate concern for you, to send back, with this letter, the beloved *Epaphroditus*, who is my dear brother in the faith, and in the ministerial office, and my fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord; yea and my associate, that endures hardships, and exposes himself to dangers with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, in our spiritual warfare, under him, against sin and Satan, and against seducers, and all the powers of this world, that set themselves;

selves in opposition to him and his cause; and (d) he is your faithful minister, and kind messenger to me, who has fully answered the trust which ye reposed in him, and has supplied me with such corporal refreshments, by your generous benefactions, and given me such other assistances, as were necessary and convenient for me \*.

26 I chose especially to send him, because he was exceeding desirous of visiting you all again; and, like a truly sympathizing friend, was extremely afflicted in his own mind, even to the sinking of his spirits, not so much on account of his own late sickness here, as of your having heard of it, which he, judging of your affection to him, by the experience he has had of it, and by his own to you, concluded would be an occasion of much grief and sore distress to you.

27 For, as ye heard, he really was seized with a distemper in its own nature mortal, and has been so dangerously ill, as to be brought to death's door: But God, whose prerogative it is to kill and save alive, has in his good providence wonderfully appeared for his recovery, in answer to prayer, even beyond our expectation; which was a great mercy, not only to himself †, in his relief and restoration to health and ease, and capacities of service; but was also an instance of God's tender compassion, as to you and many others, so particularly to myself, lest, by losing so dear and important a friend and brother, I should have been over-loaded with this addition of sorrow, to that of his sickness, and to all the other troubles, I labour under in my confinement.

28 I therefore the more studiously and diligently (*exultantius*) dispatched him with all speed to you, tho' with much self-denial in parting with him, that when ye receive him in a good state of health again, ye may rejoice at the sight, and I may have the satisfaction of contributing

#### NOTE 6.

\* It is supposed, with great probability, that *Euphroditus* was pastor of the church at *Philippi*: However, it is evident from the character the apostle here gives him, that he was a minister, and was sent as a messenger from that church to the apostle in his bonds; and he is supposed by many to be the same that is called *Epaphras*, Col. i. 7. and iv. 12. and *Philemon*, ver. 2.

† As life and health are in themselves mercies, and sickness and death are the fruit of sin; it is, in that view, a mercy, even to a good man, to be restored to health for the service of God, and the good of others, after a threatening illness; though in the view of the consequences of death, in a happy exchange of this frail and mortal life for a blessed immortality, it is better for himself

to die, than to live in this troublesome and sinful world, (see chap. i. 23.) And tho' the apostle was so much affected with *Euphroditus's* sickness; yet he seems to have made no attempt for healing him in the miraculous way; while he, doubtless, as well as others, prayed for his recovery. The reason of this might be, because he could not perform such miracles at all times, and whenever he pleased; there being no virtue in himself for it, as there was in our Lord, which was a glory and power peculiar to him, (Luke vi. 19. and viii. 46.) and because miraculous signs were for them that believe not, to confirm the gospel to them, as the apostle said of *Augures*, (1 Cor. xiv. 22.) But there seems not to have been any such occasion for working this miracle.

may be the less sorrowful.

contributing to your comfort therein, and of hearing of his arrival safe and sound to you, who spared him so long to minister to me; and so maybe the less troubled at my own loss of his company and assistance, and at my other afflictions.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.

29 See therefore that, according to my desire and hope, and your own warm professions of love to him, while he was absent, and in danger of death, ye cordially embrace him, as a servant of Christ, and for his sake, who has returned him alive and well to you: Receive him I say, with all spiritual joy, as well as with humane, civil and friendly affection: And let all such faithful labourers in the gospel, as he is, be esteemed very highly, and treated with great honour among you, for their work's sake, (1 *Thess.* v. 13.) And ye ought in a special manner to shew the highest regard to *Ephroditus*:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me.

30 Because it was by means of the great fatigues he underwent for Christ's sake, in love to him, and zeal for his interest and glory, that he contracted the illness which brought him so near the point of death: he having been excessive in his labours, even to the neglecting a due care of his health; as not regarding his own life, but willingly hazarding it, by going on my messages, and preaching the gospel to such, as I could not come at in my confinement; and by often attending upon, and ministering to me, and so making up the want of your personal assistances, which, had ye been here, ye readily would have afforded me; but which, at this distance, ye were incapable of.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How sweet and endearing are arguments taken from divine consolations, and inward glowings of love and compassion, to brotherly kindness and condescension, humility and meekness, and a sincere regard to each other's edification and comfort! And how engaging to all this is the matchless example of Christ! Though he was really God, possessed of the divine nature and perfection, equally with the Father, and so had a rightful claim to all the honours of Deity; yet, in his infinite love and pity to his people, he stooped so low as to assume human nature into personal union with himself; and, in this nature, instead of shining forth in all the lustres of Godhead, he ordinarily concealed them, and, as it were, disrobed himself of them; and, appearing in the mean state of a servant, submitted to the lowest and severest course of obedience to his Father's will and law, till he finished it in the painful and shameful death of the cross. And O how meritorious and pleasing to God the Father was this! He, as the just reward of it, has exalted him in human nature, and office-authority, to the highest dignity and honour in heaven, that this divine Saviour might be treated as the object of all adoration and homage, and the whole world of angels and men might be brought into an entire subjection to him, as Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father. With what humble caution, self-diffidence, reverence of God, and holy diligence, should believers attend to the things that relate to their own salvation! And what rich encouragement have they to it, since God, of his own

good



good pleasure, is ever present with them, to excite, assist, and animate their holy inclinations and performances! And how highly does it concern them to behave meekly and inoffensively, as becomes the children of God, with shining evidence, and a recommending profession of the gospel of salvation, in the midst of a corrupt and degenerate age! And O what a pleasure is it to the faithful servants of Christ, to see this happy fruit of their labours! For the producing of this, they could willingly submit, not only to imprisonment, but even to death itself, and rejoice in the noble testimony they should thereby bear to him: And when they are under confinement for his sake, how desirous are they to hear that the church prospers; and to send such to minister to them, as may be most acceptable and useful among them! Though there be too many that seek their own things, rather than the things of Jesus Christ, which is for a lamentation; yet, blessed be God, there are some, who, like Timothy and Epaphroditus, as well as Paul, are heartily and affectionately disposed to lay themselves out disinterestedly in the cause of the dear Redeemer, and have longing desires to be helpful to the faith and joy of his people: All such are to be received with gladness, and to be highly esteemed and honoured for their work's sake. But O how affecting is it when such eminent instruments are confined in bonds, or are sick-nigh unto death! What a sympathizing spirit is there, in such circumstances, between them and all that truly fear the Lord! How willing are they to assist one another! And what manner of rejoicing is it, when God sets his prisoners free, and has mercy on his sick servants, and on their mourning and praying friends, in restoring them to health, and to capacities and opportunities of further service!

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle cautions the Philippians against judaizing false teachers, whom he describes, as he also does true Christians in opposition to them, 1,—3. Recites his own former privileges, and renounces all these for Christ, 4,—8. Expresses his earnest desire to be found in him, and his pressing on toward perfection, 9,—14. And recommends his own example to the imitation of other believers, in opposition to the behaviour of carnal professors, 15,—21.*

## TEXT.

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is life.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**FTER all \* my dear brethren, I would excite you to a truly spiritual joy, not merely in any external helps, means, and privileges; but entirely in our Lord Jesus Christ, under a sense of his love and care, and of the blessings ye have, and hope for in him, that ye may not be perverted, and so robbed of your holy joy, by judaizing teachers; I have therefore thought proper to write the very same things, to caution you against them, that I delivered by word of mouth, while I was present with you, and have ordered *Epaphroditus* to remind you

## NOTE.

\* Finally is not here, as often in other places, a note of concluding this epistle; for the apostle was got to but about the middle of it, and was now entering upon his main design in it: But it may be of like import with *farthermore*, which is used by way of transition to what follows; and yet rejoicing

in the Lord, may look both backwards and forwards, backward to what he had said about troubles and joys; and forward to what he was going to add against judaizing teachers, and for recommending Christ and glorying in him.

you of, (*chap. ii. 25.*) and this I do without any reluctance, as if it were irksome and tedious to me to repeat old things, but with the greatest pleasure, to shew that I am still of the same mind, and that my concern is as great for your edification, and for the purity of the gospel among you, as ever: And it is needful, for your preservation and establishment in the faith, to have these things repeatedly inculcated upon you, and committed to writing, that ye may be put in remembrance of them, (*2 Pet. i. 12.*) and the more deeply impressed with them; and may have opportunity, on all occasions, of renewing them, to secure you from all the uncertainties, and mistakes of oral tradition about them.

a Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the circumcision.

2 Take heed then of those zealots, and have a strict and watchful eye upon them, who really are as worthless, vile and contemptible, as the *Jews* have thought the *Gentiles* to be, while they used to denominate them *dogs*, (*Mat. xv. 26, 27.*) and as the ancient false prophets were, that are spoken of as *dumb dogs that could not bark*, (*Isa. lvi. 10.*) but they are sometimes, as evidently malicious and injurious, fierce and biting; and at others, as sly and fawning to serve a turn, as the worst of that sort of animals can be; and are justly excluded from the blessings of the heavenly kingdom. (*Rev. xxii. 15.*) Ye cannot be too watchful against them; and therefore I repeat the charge, Stand upon your guard against these evil doers, and *deceitful workers*, (*2 Cor. xi. 13.*) who labour to destroy the truth of the gospel, and the purity of the church of Christ. Still further to strengthen my caution, and engage your attention to it, I say again, the third time, Beware, with the utmost circumspection, of that pernicious set of men, who glory in their circumcision, which, as it is now no longer an ordinance of God, is no better than merely cutting off the foreskin of the flesh\*; and who rend and tear the church to pieces; and instead of having the covenant of grace confirmed to them by that rite, as formerly, they, by, depending upon it, cut themselves off from Christ, and all the benefits of the gospel-covenant, and cannot be deem'd real Christians, whatever their pretences be. (See *Gal. v. 2,—4.*)

3 For

#### N O T E.

\* The *circumcision* signifies the cutting off, in allusion to circumcision, which the *Judaizers* gloried in; but which the apostle, to shew his contempt of what they so much boasted of, calls the *circumcision*; and he speaks of the *circumcision*, or of what had been signified by it, as the privilege and honour of real Chri-

tians, whether they had been circumcised in the flesh, or not; calling them the *circumcision*, (*ver. 3.*) meaning in a spiritual sense the *circumcised*, the abstract being here, as elsewhere, put for the concrete, according to the note on *Rom. ii. 16.*

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath wherewith he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

3 For, in opposition to these vain boasters, who may be more properly called the *Concision*, then the *Circumcision*, we, who are sincere believers in Christ, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, are after the best and most effectual manner, circumcised in heart, (*Deut. xxi. 6.* and *Rom. ii. 28, 29.*) as being *renew'd in the spirit of our minds*; (*Ephes. iv. 23.*) and so are partakers of that *circumcision of Christ*, which is signified by our baptism, (*Col. ii. 11, 12.*); and are really in covenant with God; We accordingly worship God, not by ceremonial rites and carnal ordinances, nor with merely external expressions and modes of religious adoration; but with our whole souls, in the exercise of spiritual graces, under the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, according to gospel-institution, and to our blessed Lord's own direction, (*John iv. 23, 24.*) And (*αυταγαλλομεθα*) we glory with abundant joy; yea, even triumph in Christ, and in our own interest in him, as the Lord *our righteousness and strength*, (*Isa. xlv. 24, 25.*) and as our only Mediator and ground of acceptance and hope: And we renounce all dependence upon, and expectation of favour with God on account of circumcision, or any other *Jewish* ordinances, that pertain to the flesh; or of any thing whatsoever, that we have done, or can do, in performing the righteousness of the law, (*ver. 6.*) by natural principles, which for their corruption and weakness, may very fitly be styled *flesh*. (*John iii. 6.* *Rom. ii. 5.* and *viii. 5, —9.* See the notes on those passages in the *Romans*.)

5 Tho' as to myself, were there any dependence to be had upon, or any advantage to be found in ordinances and privileges, that pertain to the flesh, or in any thing that the *Judaizers* have done in their carnal unregenerate state, I might boast of these things as much as they. If any of them imagines that he has ground or matter of confidence toward God, on account of fleshly privileges and performances, I could claim as much on this foot as any one of them all; and more than the generality of them\*, and especially than any proselyte can do.

5 As to *external privileges*, I was duly circumcised the eighth day, according to God's appointment, (*Gen. xvii. 12.*) I am not a proselyte from among the *Gentiles*, but a true-native *Israelite* of that tribe, which descended from *Jacob* by his beloved *Benjamin*, the son of his dearest wife *Rachel*; a royal tribe, from which the first king of *Israel* was taken; and a tribe that never revolted

## N O T E.

\* Mr *Pearce* thought the apostle had his eye upon some particular person among the *Philippians* that endeavoured to draw them

off from *Christ* to *Judaism*; and that he was only a *proselyte*, and not a native *Jew*; and so the apostle had more to boast of than he.

ed to the idolatrous worship of *Jeroboam's* calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, as all the rest, except that of *Judah*, did: I am a *Jew* of pure extract, both by father and mother's side, and not an *Heilenist*; but of that sort of *Jews* that used the *Hebrew* language in synagogue-worship: And I was, by education and profession, a *Pharisee*, the strictest of all the *Jewish* sects, in their observation of the law of God, and the traditions of the elders. (*Acts* xxi. 6. and xxvi. 5. and *Gal.* i. 13.)

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

6 And as to my regard to these privileges, and doing what I thought my duty in correspondence to them, I came behind none of those that pride themselves in them; my zeal for them was so flaming, that I was vehemently enraged, and went into most furious methods of cruelty and violence against the church of Christ, (*Acts* xxii. 3, 4. and xxvi. 11.) because their principles and profession lay in direct opposition to mine: And at the same time, I was so sincere and careful an observer both of the ceremonial and moral law of *Moses*, that neither mine own conscience did, nor any other person could charge me with any flagrant, or remarkable transgression of either parts of that law; having lived in all good conscience before God, according to my light, all the days of my *Judaism*, (*Acts* xxiii. 1.) and having verily thought that I did God good service in persecuting his New Testament-Church. (*Acts* xxvi. 9.)

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

7 But how much soever I once thought, and any carnal *Jew* would have flattered himself, that these things were of the greatest advantage to me in my spiritual concerns, as sufficient to secure the favour of God and heaven; yet when he called me by his grace, I saw that they were all misguided, empty and deficient; and that my dependence upon the best of them was unprofitable and injurious to me; and so I abandoned them all, in point of trust and confidence, for Christ, and (*γρημα*) I esteemed them as nothing, and worse than nothing to be relied upon, in competition with him.

8 Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ,

8 Yea, and (*αλλα μετρηται και γρημα*) so far am I, even now, after many years knowledge and experience of the gospel-way of salvation by Jesus Christ alone, from altering my mind as to this matter, that I really still reckon, not only those things, but even all that I have done, in a way of religious and moral obedience since my conversion, which is much more than is found in any carnal *Jew*; I count all this, as well as every worldly enjoyment, to be loss, in comparison with the superabundantly more excellent, fiducial and experimental knowledge of Christ, as the only Saviour, whom

I hum-

I humbly claim and trust in as my Lord, according to the gospel-discovery of him; for whose sake, and in exchange for whom, I have deemed all things, tho' not absolutely, yet in a comparative view, and in point of confidence in them, as no better than loss; and have cast them all away, as goods are thrown over-board, when they endanger sinking the ship; and I do still reckon them to be not only so, but even, if rested in for salvation, like such worthless and contemptible things, as dung, dregs, or dog's meat, (*σκυλαρα*) to the end that, (*ἵνα*) by an utter renunciation of them in point of justification, I may at length gain a complete enjoyment of Christ, and of all his saving benefits.

9 And he found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

9 And this I do, that when the strict and public scrutiny, trial and final decision of my state shall come on, I may be found in Christ with safety, as in a city of refuge; and may be found to be vitally united with him, as a member of his mystical body, and comprehended in him, as my covenant-head; and so may stand before God in judgment, not as appearing at his bar in my own personal righteousness, to be dealt with according to its desert, which at best is very imperfectly answerable to the requirements of God's holy law; but as clothed with, and judged according to the merit of that righteousness, which consists, not in faith itself, but is unto, and upon all true believers through faith in Christ, (*Rom. iii. 22.*); even that righteousness, which he wrought out, by his obedience and sufferings unto death, to the full satisfaction of law and justice in my room and stead; the righteousness, which is of God's own appointing and accepting for justification, and of his imputing, to discharge from condemnation, and intitle to eternal life, in a way of believing †.

10 And

#### N O T E.

† This context, I think, gives us a beautiful gradation of the apostle's renouncing all trust and confidence in any righteousness but that of Christ: He begins, ver. 5, 6, 7. with renouncing his *Jewish* privileges, and his *pharisaical* righteousness, which consisted in his observance of the moral, as well as ceremonial precepts of the law: For, some at least of the Pharisees expected to be justified, not merely by a ceremonial, but also by a moral righteousness, joined with it, in conformity to the law, as appears from our Lord's parable of the Pharisee and publican, *Luke xviii. 11, 12.* and such a Pharisee the famous *Gamaliel* seems to have been, if we may judge of his moral character from the probity and piety toward God that breathed in his admirable speech, *Acs v. 34,—39.*

And *Paul*, the Pharisee, who was brought up under him, was as conscientious an observer of moral obedience as any other of that sect could be supposed to be; since he declares, that, even in that state, according to his then sense of things, he had "lived in "all good conscience before God," (*Acs xxiii. 1.*) And then he advances, ver. 8, 9. to a discharging of all trust, not only in this, but also in his own personal righteousness, after he became a Christian: For having said, with a reference back to the things before mentioned, "what things were gain to "me, those I counted loss for Christ," ver. 7. he adds, ver. 8. "Yea doubtless, and I "do count loss for Christ, *not* those things" only, as we have it before, (ver. 7.) but "all things," without exception or reserve of

10 That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

10 And my earnest desire is, not only to be found in Christ at the last day, but that in the mean while, and in order thereunto, I may have an experimental growing acquaintance with him in the glory of his person and offices, and in the efficacy of his resurrection, as the head of the body, for confirming my joyful hopes of eternal life, on that foot, and in virtue of it, (1 Pet. i. 3.); and for animating me unto the most vigorous and active obedience, whereby I may still further live to God, in conformity to my risen Saviour; and may be daily led into holy communion with him, in his crucifixion, for *crucifying the old man, the body of sin, that it may be utterly destroyed*, (Rom. vi. 6); as also for patiently enduring all sufferings, even unto death, for his sake, in conformity to him; who died, and rose again.

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead:

11 This is my constant aim and pursuit, that by these, and all other means of God's appointment, I in due time \* may arrive, like sailors to their port, at that compleat state of all possible blessedness and glory, which the children of God shall enjoy at the resurrection of the just, when their mortal bodies shall be raised, in a re-union with their souls, to immortal life.

12 Not as tho' I had already attained

12 I own that I have not already † received the prize, which I am running for, nor (*ὅτι κτήσασθαι*) am I yet,

#### N O T E S.

of any thing done by him, after, as well as before conversion: For ver. 9. shows that what he intended was, all righteousness of his own for justification according to the requirements of the law; and he declares, that he persisted still in renouncing even this, as insufficient to justify him; and so he sets aside all imaginable righteousness of our own, in opposition to that of faith; and even faith itself, which is as much a work of righteousness, and as much our own, inherent in us, and acted by us, as any other grace, or instance of evangelical obedience: He disclaims regarding *this*, as his justifying righteousness, while he accurately distinguishes faith from this righteousness, which he does not say is faith itself, but is "the righteousness which is of God through faith;" and "by faith," as God imputes it, and faith receives it. (See the note on Rom. iii. 20. And his *winning or gaining Christ*, and being found in him, seems to relate, not merely to his having an interest in Christ, and being united to him, but to look forward to what he should be at death and judgment: for he had already, and knew that he had, a sure interest in Christ, and so in that sense, was already in him: and yet he speaks of his present desire and pursuit, that he might,

upon trial, be found a partaker of this comprehensive blessing, which evidently relates to some time to come, as expressed in the following verses.

\* If, by any means (*ἵνα*) here, and, if that I may, (*ἵνα*) ver. 12. cannot be fairly understood to signify, that the apostle was in any doubt about his own final and complete salvation, since he so often speaks of his firm expectation of it: And therefore the particle (*ἵνα*) if, in these places, is not to be considered as a particle of doubting, but may be rendered that, as it is twice together, Acts xxvi. 23. and so, in the present case, it only intimates the necessity of using the means, in order to attaining the end. (See Zanchy and Peirce on this verse.)

† Already attained (*κτῆσθαι*) is a different word from might attain, (*καταρτῆσαι*) in the preceding verse. There it alludes to persons arriving in a harbour, and is used in that sense, Acts xviii. 19. 24. and xxvii. 12. and xxviii. 13. But here it alludes to a victor's receiving the prize; and so this, and several other terms in the following verses, are *agonistical*; taken from the Grecian games; then in use; one of which was running races for a prize that was to be won: and it is in this view that we are to consider "pressing toward

aised, either were already perfect: but I follow after; if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

yet, like those that have finished their course, made perfect in holiness, as I fain would be, and as I must be, before I am honoured with *the crown of righteousness*, (2 Tim. iv. 8.); but (*διὰ τὸ*) I pursue my race, stretching forth with the utmost eagerness, that, in God's way and time, I may reach perfection, and lay hold on eternal life; for the attaining of which (*καταλαβόν*) I was laid hold on by the power and grace of Christ, who met me in the way to *Damascus*, plucked me as a brand out of the fire, and took possession of me for himself, that I might be eternally saved.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

14 I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

13, 14 Whatsoever others, among your judaizing boasters, may pretend to, I again, my brethren, freely acknowledge, that I do not reckon myself to have already reached to, or obtained a state of perfect holiness, any more than of perfect happiness; but mine eye is fixed upon it, as the one point in view; and in all my running for it, like racers in your neighbouring games, I do not look back to the law and my judaizing performances of it, nor to the advances I have already made in gospel-holiness; nor do I regard them, as if these attainments were sufficient, and I might stop there: But, as it were forgetting them, and stretching forth (*ἐκτρέφοντες*) with all my might, to come up to the further duties and exercises of grace that lye before me, I pursue my course toward Christ and heaven, according to my main scope, (*κατὰ σκοπόν*) fixing mine eye upon it, as archers do upon their mark, that I may reach to a state of perfect holiness, in order to my receiving the prize of eternal glory; to the obtaining of which, God has called me, and every true believer, by Christ Jesus, (2 Thess. ii. 14. and 1 Pet. v. 10.) with an high and heavenly calling, that comes from heaven, leads to it, and shall issue in it \*; the glory of which is to be obtained only in and through him, with whom *our life is hid in God, that when he who is our life shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory.* (Col. iii. 3, 4.)

15 Let us therefore, as many as be

15 As many of us therefore as are, though not in all respects perfect †; yet so far advanced in Christianity,

#### N O T E S.

\* "toward the mark for the prize," ver. 14. not as though the prize were to be gained for the running, (see the note on Rom. vi. 13. and ix. 16.) as in the *Grecian* games; but only at the end of it, as running is the necessary means, according to God's appointment, of obtaining it.

† As in Christ Jesus may relate either to the high calling of God, or to the prize, the paraphrase is formed to take in both senses.

† It is plain that by *as many as be perfect*, the apostle could not mean, that were so in the strictest sense of the expression: because he had just before said of himself, that *he was not already perfect*; and yet he here puts himself in among those that he styles perfect; and it is not to be supposed that any other Christians were more perfect than himself. (See the note on 1 Cor. ii. 6.)

be perfect, be thus minded : and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you :

ty, that, in a qualified sense, we may be called perfect, as all the essential parts of the new creature are formed in us, to a much greater degree than in weak believers. Let us attend to this main point of counting all things but loss for Christ, that we may be found in him, and be thoroughly conformed to him, (*ver. 7,—11.*) ; and if there be any of you that are right, as to this important doctrine, and yet have different sentiments from me, and from those that are like-minded with me, as to the continuance of the *Mosaic* law, and of *Jewish* privileges, God will clear up even this to you, and *that* ere long, when the temple and *Jewish* state shall be demolished.

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

16 However, leaving that matter to God, to discover it to such, in his own way and time ; as far as we severally have hitherto reached in knowledge, grace, or holiness, let us keep close to one and the same rule, and practise according to it, as it is plainly revealed in the sacred canon, (*κατὰ*) which, among other things, assures us, that in *Christ Jesus* neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but saith which works by love, or a new creature, (*Gal. v. 6. and vi. 15, 16.*) and let us be unanimous in our adherence to this rule.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.

17 I would fain have you, my beloved brethren, concur one with another, in following my example in principle and practice, as to the fore-mentioned things, in which I follow Christ ; and let it be your great care to observe those believers, as patterns worthy of imitation, who walk according to the truth of the gospel †, after the same manner, as ye have it exemplified in myself and other ministers or Christians, that are led into the spirituality and light of the New Testament-dispensation.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ :

18 This I would recommend with the greatest earnestness to you, to prevent your being misled and perverted by judaizing teachers : For there are many of them, of whom I frequently warned you when I was with you ; and, finding that they still continue obstinate, and are so busy among you, I now again tell you, with a grief of heart which forces tears from mine eyes, in consideration of the dishonour brought to Christ and the gospel, and of your danger of being perverted by them, as well as of their own deplorable condition, that, whatsoever their pretences be, they are in reality, both

#### N O T E.

† The apostle, according to his wonted wisdom and modesty, mentions the example of others, as well as his own, to prevent all

appearance of ostentation, as though he would only propose himself to their imitation.



19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even

both doctrinally \* and practically, the worst of all enemies to the fundamental article of salvation alone by a crucified Christ, through his atoning death, and are utterly averse to taking up their cross and following him; all which will turn to their own confusion.

19 Who, in the winding up of things at last, will find it to issue in their eternal perdition, as they are *deceitful workers, whose end shall be according to their works*, (2 Cor. xi. 13.) Nor can it be expected to be otherwise with such sort of men, who make the gratification of carnal views and pleasures their principal aim, and so set up the pampering of their own appetites as their chief good, instead of, and in opposition to God and his glory; who also are so fond of deceiving, and making a gain of their converts to promote their secular interests, as even to boast of it, which, instead of being to their honour, is really matter of the greatest shame to them; and who attend to, relish and pursue nothing, under all their religious profession, but mean, empty, uncertain, unsatisfying, and defiling enjoyments, that are of an earthly nature, and relate only to this lower world.

20 It is not these worthless and pernicious leaders that ye are to follow; but ye ought to imitate us, who are of a contrary spirit, temper, and behaviour, suitable to our more excellent state and character: For as we are citizens of the celestial *Jerusalem*, our hearts and affections rising above the things of earth and sense, ascend up to heaven, and (το πομπιμὸν) our traffic lies in the daily correspondence we carry on there with Christ himself, (Col. iii. 1.) from whence we also look, long, and hope for the great and only Saviour, to descend at the last day, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath promised to *come again, and receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also*, (John xiv. 3.)

21 Who will then transform these vile and mortal bodies of ours, which carry the marks of our humiliation in their weakness, weariness, and infirmity, and in their being clogs and hindrances to the spiritual and holy exercises of the soul, since, and by means of the fall, and which will be meaner and more contemptible still in the rottenness and corruption of the grave; he will

#### N O T E.

\* They were doctrinal enemies to the cross of Christ, as they did not depend upon his death alone for salvation, but made circumcision, and the observance of the whole law of Moses, necessary to it; and they were practical enemies to his cross, as they plead-

ed for Mosaic rites to avoid reproach and persecution from the Jews, and to indulge their sensitive appetites, instead of crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts, in conformity to, and by virtue derived from, the crucifixion of Christ.

even to subdue  
all things unto  
himself.

will then make a glorious change upon them, that they may rise in a beautiful and shining resemblance of his own most glorious body, (see 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49.); according to the wonderful energy and operation of his almighty power, which can be no less than divine, (Acts xxvi. 8. Rom. iv. 17. and Ephes. i. 19, 20.) by which our blessed Lord is able to overcome all difficulties, as he certainly will, in bringing every thing that opposes him into an entire subjection to himself, as well as in destroying the last enemy, which is death. (1 Cor. xv. 26.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What need have Christians to be often warned of seducers ! Faithful ministers should never be weary of cautioning them, or of putting them upon the most diligent watch against those that carp and cavil at the purity of the gospel, and are themselves such workers of iniquity as to be both doctrinally and practically grievous enemies to the merit, virtue, and honour of a crucified Jesus. They trust in something of their own, instead of him and his righteousness; and yet they are sensual and carnal, and even glory in the most shameful enormities, and so cut themselves off from all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and entail everlasting destruction upon themselves. But O how happy is it to be circumscribed in heart, to be spiritual and evangelical worshippers of God, to rejoice and glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to place no confidence in external privileges and zeal for them; no, nor in our own moral or religious righteousness ! None of these are to be set in competition with Christ, or relied upon for acceptance with God to eternal life. They are all to be laid aside as nothing; yea, as loss and dung, not as in themselves, but as set up in opposition to the saving knowledge of Christ, and being found at death and judgment in union with him, and interested in that righteousness of his which is made over for justification through faith in him. And yet how carefully should we guard against neglecting sanctification and holiness, which are as necessary to our enjoying God, as justification itself ! And how desirous ought we to be of having such a knowledge of Christ, as shall be a means of deriving virtue from his death and resurrection, to make us conformable to him in both, by dying unto sin, and living unto God ! The most eminent believers upon earth are far from being perfect herein; and therefore, without taking up with present attainments, should be continually pressing onwards after a perfection in all knowledge, grace, and holiness, till they shall reach it, at the end of their race, in a better world, according to what Christ designed them for, when he laid hold of them by his Spirit. Though some Christians are more advanced in light and experience than others; yet they all ought to be of the same mind, with respect to these important points; and, as far as they have attained, should walk together in brotherly love, and according to the rule of God's word. And if there be any thing of less consequence, in which their sentiments differ, they should bear with one another, and leave it to God to convince those that are mistaken, as to such things, after all proper methods have been unsuccessfully try'd. in the spirit of meekness, to set them right. How ambitious should we be of carefully observing, and copying after those, who, like the apostle, set us the most laudable example; whose hearts, affections, and conversation are much in heaven, like citizens of that holy and delightful state, where Jesus our Saviour lives in all his glory; and from whence believers look, with longing desire and hope, for his return to take them up thither ! And O what an amazingly happy change will he then make upon these frail, contemptible, and mortal bodies ! He will then form them into the likeness of his own most glorious body, by an act of divine Omnipotence, which surmounts all difficulties, and by which he himself is, and will prove to be able to vanquish death, and all his and our enemies.

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle most affectionately exhorts the Philippians to stand fast in the Lord, ver. 1. Gives directions to some particular persons among them, and to them all in general, 2,—9. Expresses his great satisfaction in the supply they had sent him, and his own contentment in every condition of life, adding a doxology to God the Father, 10,—20. Salutes them, and sends the salutations of others; and closes all with his usual benediction, 21,—23.*

## TEXT.

Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**S, therefore, ye have hitherto continued in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and given good proof of your holy obedience; (*chap. i. 5. and ii. 12.*); and as I have exhorted you to follow my example in a persevering dependence on Christ, and pressing toward perfection, till we get to heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, (*chap. iii. 8,—21.*) I earnestly intreat you, my brethren in the faith, to abide stedfast, and unshaken in your fiducial adherence to, and holy profession of the Lord Jesus, and in his strength, as your Head and Saviour, whatever difficulties and dangers ye may be exposed to for it; and I do this with the greatest affection to, and hope concerning you, who in consideration of your commendable behaviour hitherto, are so greatly endeared to me, that I most heartily love you, and long for your further establishment and proficiency, as also for an opportunity of seeing you again, (*chap. i. 8.*) as the dear seals of my ministry, whom I think of as my joy and crown of rejoicing now, and as to be yet more abundantly so, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming, (*1 Thess. ii. 19.*) In the thoughts of which, I want words sufficient to express the ardors and overflowings of my heart to you †, my most affectionately beloved friends and brethren in the Lord.

2 I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

2 I in a particular manner recommended it to *Euodias* and do the same to *Syntyche*\*, that they, laying aside all differences, unanimously agree one with another, and with the whole church in love and affection, and in the doctrines

## N O T E S.

† What a pile of words does the apostle here heap up, to express the fervors of his love to these *Philippians*, and ingratiate himself, after his usual manner, with them: as though they, and they only, had ingrossed his affections.

\* *Euodias* and *Syntyche* are most commonly thought to have been two women of note,

that had been considerably eminent in the church, but were now at variance one with the other, and had been tampered with by the Jewish zealots, to pervert them; and therefore the apostle intreated them to be reconciled one to the other, and to continue stedfast in the faith, and united with the church.

doctrines of Christ; in their adherence to them; and in a becoming profession of them.

3 And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

3 And I earnestly beseech you, my sincere and faithful companion, who cheerfully draw in the same yoke with myself, for promoting the interest of Christ †, that you would do your utmost to help forward this good design, in the most prudent, tender, and affectionate manner, by advising and exhorting these two eminent women, heartily to unite in the common cause again, who were very diligent and assistant to me, though not in public ministrations, yet in subserving my work of preaching the gospel, by private instructions and prayers, by their exemplary behaviour, and their sympathizing and undergoing great labour and sufferings with me, and taking care of me in all my wants and trials, while I was engaged in that work at *Philippi*; and who were alike serviceable to the excellent *Clement* ‖, and several others of my brethren in the ministry, that have embarked in the same glorious cause, and taken great pains, together with me, in spreading the gospel; and of whom I am verily persuaded, from what appears of the grace of God in them, that they are favourites of heaven; as certainly and particularly chosen of God to eternal life, from the foundation of the world, as if their names had been registered, or inrolled in a book, among the appointed heirs of salvation, (*Rev. xvii. 8.*)

4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

4 As to the whole body of true believers among you, it is your duty and privilege, considering all the blessings ye have in hand and in hope, to rejoice and triumph, not after a carnal, but spiritual manner, in the Lord Jesus your Head and Saviour, as I have already told you, (*chap. iii. 1.*) and now repeat it, that ye may do so on all occasions, and in all circumstances, whatever sufferings or tribulations ye may be exposed to on his account. I say unto you now again, that, even in the midst of them all, it is your great duty and privilege to rejoice in the Lord, and in your sufferings for his sake, (*chap. i. 28, 29. and 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14.*) which, being patiently endured, are an honour to him and yourselves, and will finally turn to your own best account.

5 Main-

#### N O T E S.

† Who it was that the apostle calls *true yoke-fellow*, though well known to the church at *Philippi*, is variously conjectured, with great uncertainty, at this distance of time. Some suppose that it was the husband, or brother of one of the women before-mentioned; others, that it was some noted companion, or fellow-labourer of the apostle's, and others, that it really was his wife, they sup-

posing him to be a married man. (See Mr *Peirce's* note.) And it seems to me, that the help which the apostle desired this person to give *Euodia* and *Synycha*, related to a misunderstanding that was between them.

‖ Who this *Clement* was, whether *Clement Romanus*, or some other, is very uncertain, and of no importance for us to know.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

5 Maintain and discover a meek, patient, and gentle temper of spirit (*to xunike*) towards all men, and particularly toward your very persecutors themselves; and a weanedness of affection from the things of this life, as knowing that the Lord Jesus is near at hand to observe your behaviour, and take your part; and will soon appear to the confusion of your Jewish adversaries, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and will come, ere long, as the Judge of the whole world, to put an end to the present state of things, and all your afflictions, and to do justice to your righteous cause, and render tribulation to them that trouble you, (2 Thess. i. 6.)

6 Whatever difficulties, wants, or dangers may befall you, relating to this present world, take heed that ye do not perplex yourselves with anxious, cutting, distrustful, and distracting cares about any of them, (*oudenis merimnate*) how ye shall be able, either to bear up under them, or to avoid them, or get through them: But as a remedy against this, (*in xate*) in every time and circumstance of things, be they ever so afflictive, let your addresses be presented to God, who loves to hear you telling him the desires of your hearts, (though he perfectly knows them all before-hand,) that ye may own your entire dependence upon him, and pay the religious homage due to him; and that he may glorify his own name, as a God hearing prayer. Let this be done with all sorts of humble petitions and pleas, and with believing, earnest importunity and perseverance, in deprecating evils that ye are attended with, or in danger of, and in imploring the blessings ye need; as also with cheerful gratitude, and high ascriptions of glory to him, under a sense of your own unworthiness, and of the riches and freeness of his goodness and grace, for all the mercies that ye enjoy and hope for, in your very worst condition, which might be worse still, relating to this world and that which is to come.

7 And in answer to your humble importunity, and believing requests, the most excellent peace, which God gives and approves of; peace with him, as your reconciled God and Father through his beloved Son, together with a sweet sense of it in your own souls; peace of conscience through the atoning blood of Jesus; peace with one another; and the peace of a sanctified heart, and of a quiet calmness of spirit with regard to all other persons and things; even that peace which exceeds all adequate conceptions of believers themselves, much more of those that have not experienced it. This most excellent peace, whatsoever ye may suffer in the body,

will

will defend and guard our hearts, as in a strong garrison, (*παρρησία*) and fortify your minds with a holy composure; and so preserve your whole souls from sinning, or fainting under your troubles, and from apostatizing by means of them; against which ye will be secured through the knowledge of Christ, and your union with him, as your Head and Saviour, and through his merit and sufferings for you.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

8 To close with a recommendation of some general duties to you, my brethren beloved in the Lord, whatsoever things are true and sincere in words and actions, professions and engagements, and are agreeable to the word of truth, and the reason of things, free from all hypocrisy and deceit: Whatsoever things are venerable, decent, and becoming, in dress, language, and deportment, according to your respective stations and relations, as men and Christians: Whatsoever things are just and due to God and man, in all your dealings with him and them: Whatsoever things belong to chastity and purity of mind, free from all defilement of sin in heart, speech, and behaviour: Whatsoever things are of an amiable nature, and render the subjects and practitioners of them lovely in the eyes of God and man: Whatsoever things are deemed reputable especially by the sober, wise, and religious part of mankind, among whom *a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*, (Prov. xxii. 1.) If there be any thing, as undoubtedly there is, in all this, or in whatsoever may be supposed to be added to it of a moral nature, in the whole compass of natural and revealed religion, that is truly virtuous, brave, and laudable; let these things dwell habitually upon your minds; and often reflect upon them, and study their nature, obligation, and importance, in order to your putting them into practice upon Christian principles, by divine assistance, to the glory of God, and the credit of your holy profession of Christ's name, and to your own and others good.

9 Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

9 These and such like excellent things, relating to a holy life and conversation, in all the duties of morality, as well as of piety, which ye have acquired the knowledge of, (*μαθήσασθε*) as the disciples of Jesus, and have professed to assent and consent to, and approve, as right and fit for regulating your own conduct; and which ye have been taught by my public ministry, and private instructions, and have seen exemplified in my own walk and behaviour, when I was with you. Attend seriously unto these things, and reduce them into practice: And in this way, God, who is at peace with you thro'

the

the blood of Jesus, and is the author of all inward peace; and who delights in the prosperity of his servants, and in their orderly deportment, as becomes the gospel, will take pleasure to dwell among you, to manifest himself to you, as your God, and to own and bless you, as a people near and dear to him.

9 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

10 But, to give further vent to the grateful sense I have of your kind and Christian regards to me, I cannot tell how to forbear repeating the great satisfaction and joy of my soul, in reflecting on the love and grace of our Lord Jesus, who inclined your hearts to act a friendly and affectionate part toward me for his sake now again, after your former generosity, (*ver. 15, 16.*) and after your seeming neglect of me since that time; inasmuch as your concern for supplying my wants, in my imprisonment and difficulties, has now, at length, visibly revived, and discovered itself with vigour, (*and-ante*) like a good tree, that seemed barren in the winter, but sprouts again in the spring, and brings forth fruit in its season: For I find ye were all along solicitously thoughtful about sending to my relief, only your circumstances did not admit of your doing it so soon as ye desired; and ye had no opportunity of conveying your liberality to me.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

11 I do not mention these things, as though I were reduced to insupportable wants, or were uneasy under those that attended me; or as though I rejoiced only, because they are now supplied by your bounty; no, these things are of little account with me: For, through the vicissitude of my affairs, and a sanctified use of them by divine grace, I have been taught and enabled to learn and practise the great lesson of Christian contentment in every state and condition of this life into which Providence brings me; as being fully satisfied, that my heavenly Father orders what is best for me, and that he *will never leave, nor forsake me*, (*Heb. xiii. 5.*); and as having, upon this principle, a sufficiency in myself (*αὐτάρκεια*) of all joy and peace in believing, which supplies the want of temporal good things.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

12 In this manner I am brought to learn the happy and holy skill of possessing my own soul in peace and patience, when I am thrown into the most contemptible and humbling circumstances, that I may not be dejected and discomposed by them; and I understand the way of behaving without elation of mind, or being over-pleased and lifted up, when providence smiles upon me: Wherever I am, and into what situation of things soever I be cast, I am well initiated in the sacred know-

knowledge (*μεκρυματι*) of conducting with an equal and becoming temper of spirit: When I am refreshed and filled with provisions for bodily sustenance; and when I am hungry for want of them; yea, when I have the greatest affluence of the good things of this life; and when I am in the greatest degree destitute of them, I am taught to exercise the graces, and perform the duties that belong to these different and contrary lots and conditions, as to external matters.

13 I can do all things thro' Christ which strength-  
eneth me.

13 Not that I am so vain-glorious, as to think that I can do these great things of myself, or even merely by the strength of the grace that I have already received; but I find, by daily experience, that I am enabled to perform, not only these, but every other duty that I am called to, as a Christian and an apostle, through the continual concurring aids and assistances of Christ, by virtue of my union with him, in whose grace I am strong, (2 Tim. ii. 1.) and who is ever with me to animate, excite, and strengthen me for them.

14 Notwith-  
standing, ye have  
well done that  
ye did communi-  
cate with my af-  
fliction.

14 However, this does not at all lessen your kindness to me, and concern for me; nor detract from the reasonableness of your bounty: Ye have acted a truly Christian part, which is very acceptable to me, and to God himself through Jesus Christ, (*ver.* 18.); because of the love which ye have testified to the Lord, and to me his prisoner and servant, in that ye sympathized with me in my bonds and tribulations, and sent a liberal and suitable supply for my relief under them.

15 Now ye Phi-  
lippians, know al-  
so, that in the be-  
ginning of the  
gospel when I  
departed from  
Macedonia, no  
church communi-  
cated with me, as  
concerning giv-  
ing and receiv-  
ing, but ye only.

15 And (*15*) to shew the grateful sense I have, my dear *Philippian*-brethren, of all your kindness to me, I mention it to your honour, and take pleasure in reminding you of it, that not now of late only, but also when I was first in your parts, and preached the gospel to you; and particularly when I was about to take my leave of you †, and to go from your *Macedonian*-province into other countries, to labour there in the work of the Lord, no other church besides yours contributed to my support, that as I freely gave, and they received spiritual things, so they might give, and I receive of their temporal things; which certainly ought to have been done by other churches, (1 Tim. v. 17, 18.); tho', that I might not seem mercenary, I never asked it of them, but great was your liberality.

16 For

#### N O T E.

† This should be render'd according to the latitude of the sense, (*οτι εβασα αν*) when I was about to go from Macedonia: For *Thessalonica* was the chief city of *Macedonia*; and the apostle here mentions their sending to his relief, while he was there, and speaks

of it to their great commendation, that they, and they only should do it, while he was in such an opulent city, and through the neglect of the Christians there, was forced to work with his own hands for a livelihood.



16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

16 For even while I was ministering at *Thessalonica*, where I met with the most violent and outrageous opposition from the unbelieving *Jews*, (*Acts* xvii. 5, &c.) and was not supplied with necessaries by the Christians of that rich city, but was obliged to labour with my own hands, (*1 Thess.* ii. 9. and *2d Epist.* iii. 8.) ye, from time to time, sent generous contributions for my comfortable subsistence, in the pressing circumstances that then attended me.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

17 I do not mention these things as a fetch to get still more of you, as if I would desire you now to do any thing further of this kind for me; no, but my great aim in making this grateful acknowledgment is, that it might be a means of encouraging you to go on with your Christian generosity and benevolence, in all other cases, for promoting the cause of Christ, as the genuine fruit of your faith, and love to him and to his people, every where, as there may be occasion; fruit, that will turn, as to his honour in this world, so to your own rich advantage in the great day of account, for the world to come. (*See Mat.* xxv. 35,—40, and *Heb.* vi. 10, 18.)

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

18 But, as to myself in particular, I have all that I need for corporal sustenance; and what ye have now sent is abundantly sufficient to supply my wants: I have as much as I wish for; and my soul is as full of joy and praise, as my body is refreshed with your benevolence; having received, as I hereby thankfully acknowledge, a repeated testimony of your affection, and a substantial proof of it in the collections which ye sent me by the hands of your faithful and beloved messenger *Epaphroditus*, which, to allude to the offerings under the law, (*Lev.* ii. 1, 2. and iii. 16.) are an odour of a sweet smelling favour, a spiritual sacrifice of acknowledgment to God, which he accepts, and is highly pleased with, thro' Jesus Christ. (*Heb.* xiii. 16. and *1 Pet.* ii. 5.)

19 But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

19 And though, in my poor circumstances, I am not able to make you any temporal recompence; yet my covenant-God and Father, who hath inclined your hearts to shew all this kindness to me, will not suffer you to be losers by what ye do for him, or for any of his saints and servants for his sake; but will make you rich returns, not only with such temporal good things as he sees to be needful and best for you; but especially with all spiritual and eternal blessings, that are suited to your various wants; and he will do this in a glorious manner with an abundant liberality, like himself, in proportion to his own infinite treasures of grace and glory, which he has provided in Christ, and gives with him,

him, not for any worthiness in yourselves, but on account of his mediation, and by virtue of your union and communion with him, as your Head and Saviour.

20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

20 Now unto this all-sufficient and glorious God, who is the God of nature, and of providence and grace, and the giver of all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, and is our Father in Christ Jesus, let us jointly ascribe all possible honour, thanksgiving, blessing and praise, from henceforth to all eternity, as is most due, both on account of what he is in himself, and has been, is, and for ever will be to us; in testimony of our hearty concurrence herein, may we all add, *Amen*.

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

21 Let my most cordial and Christian-love be acceptable to all, that are professionally, and I trust really renewed and sanctified, as members of Christ, in union with him, for whose sake, I heartily wish that all prosperity for both worlds may attend them. All my brethren in the ministry, † that are with me at *Rome*, desire to be also most kindly remembered to you.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

22 Yea, all the professing believers in these parts, who in charity are looked upon as sanctified by the Holy Ghost, send the like assurances of their love and Christian respects to you: And more especially the converts that have been made from among the domestics of *Nero*, the emperor, and continue their civil stations in his family, are so far from being ashamed to own you, that they desire me to acquaint you with their affectionate esteem of you, and fervent prayers for your present and eternal welfare.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

23 To conclude, as I began, (*chap. i. 2.*) my great desire and prayer for all and every one of you is, that the free favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, yours and mine, may be ever toward you, and be manifested in all its peculiar, abundant, and distinguishing fruits and effects to each of you singly, and to all of you jointly, as a church, both in this world and for ever in the next, *Amen*. So I heartily wish it may be, and humbly trust it will be.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

With what affectionate love and joy do the ministers of Christ think of the saints, as brethren, whose names are enrolled in the book of life, and who shew benevolent regards to themselves, as occasions require! How grateful are they in their acknowledgments of the kindness of their Christian friends, not from a selfish temper, but from a desire that they may bring forth spiritual fruits of faith and love, which shall turn to their own best account! And how earnestly concerned

#### N O T E.

† I have consider'd these brethren as meant, not of private Christians, but of ministers, to distinguish them from all the saints, whose

salutations are sent in the next verse: (and see the note on *Col. iv. 12.*)

cerned are they for the establishment of Christians in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; for their continual comfort in the profession of it; and for their union in heart, design, and labour, to help forward the work of the Lord! And O how patient towards enemies, and how weaned from this world, should they be, in view and hope, that the Lord Jesus will soon put an end to all their troubles, and set every thing to rights in the day of judgment? They neither need, nor ought to be anxiously solicitous about any of the affairs of this life; but should commit all their concerns, by faith, in prayer to God, with thanksgivings for his many mercies to them; and, in this way, the most excellent peace which God himself will give them through Jesus Christ, and which inexpressibly surpasses all others, and all adequate conceptions will compose, fortify, and guard their hearts against all tribulations and fears. But O how concerned should they be to cultivate and abound in every thing that is decent and becoming, just, and equitable, pure, and holy, amiable, and excellent in itself: yea, and in whatsoever is justly deemed a reputation to the Christian character among all sorts of men! If we are enabled to practise these things, as they have been exemplified in the great apostle, we may depend upon it, that God will delight to dwell with us, and manifest himself to us, as our reconciled God and Father. And O what a high attainment in Christianity is it, when we have learned how to behave as becomes us, in prosperity and adversity, in fulness and in want; and to be thoroughly contented in every trying circumstance of life! And yet, great as this attainment is, every true believer may come up to it, through Christ's strengthenings, as well as the apostle himself: And when they are brought to this, they, though grateful to their benefactors like him, think they have enough, and abound in all that is good for them, and are full of sweet contentment in their own souls; and they are satisfied that their God will supply all their real wants, for time and eternity, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. And O how abundant must that supply be, which is answerable to his infinite inexhaustible riches, in giving like a God! How cordially should Christian salutations pass between the saints, in Christ Jesus, in their conversing together, and writing to one another! How affectionately should they wish and pray, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ may be with all of this character! And how cheerfully unite in ascribing glory to God their heavenly Father, for ever and ever! Amen. So let it be; and so it will be with all that sincerely love him.

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A PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
Apostle PAUL's Epistle  
TO THE  
COLOSSIANS,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the EPISTLE to the COLOSSIANS.

**C**OLOSSE was a great and populous city of *Phrygia*; and this Epistle is generally thought to have been wrote by the apostle *Paul* to the church there during his first imprisonment at *Rome*, about the same time with those that were sent to the *Ephesians* and *Philippians*. Hence many of the sentiments and expressions, in all these epistles, are much of the same strain, the occasions being much alike; and the apostle's mind and heart being then full of those thoughts which he took pleasure in communicating to the churches; and so they cast a light one upon the others: Only there seems to be this difference between the churches at *Ephesus* and *Philippi*, and this at *Colosse*, that the apostle had been personally among them, and not among the *Colossians*; for, in this Epistle, he mentions *only* his having heard of their faith in *Christ Jesus*; and of the love which they had to all the saints, (chap. i. 4.) ; and speaks of the great conflict he had for them, and for those at *Laodicea*, and as many as had not seen his face in the flesh, (chap. ii. 1.) ; which, by the most natural construction of the sentence, includes those of *Colosse*, as persons that had never seen him; and he takes notice of *Epaphras*, as a dear fellow-servant, who was for them a faithful minister of *Christ*, from whom they had learned the doctrine of the grace of God in truth, (chap. i. 6, 7.) and who was one of themselves. (chap. iv. 12.) from hence some conclude, that *Epaphras* was the first that planted the gospel, and gathered the church at *Colosse*: But it is uncertain, whether it were he or any other minister. However, as they were, I think, mostly a *Gentile*-church, and the apostle was made a minister, in a special manner, to the *Gentiles*, according to the dispensation of God, which was given to him, (chap. i. 25,—27) his principal view was to establish these *Colossians* in the faith of the gospel, against

against the attempts of judaizing teachers to bring them into a subjection to the law of *Moses* as necessary for salvation.

He accordingly begins the Epistle with his usual salutation, and thanksgiving to God for what he had heard of their faith, love, and hope, and prays for their practical proficiency in the knowledge of Christ, of whom, and of whose grace to them, he gives the most exalted ideas, to engage their adherence to him, according to the gospel, (*chap. i.*); then proceeds to discover his great concern for their further establishment in Christ, and for their being guarded against those errors of philosophy and judaism that interfered with their relation to, and benefit by him, (*chap. ii.*) And on supposition that, according to their profession, they were really risen with Christ, he exhorts them to heavenly mindedness, mortification of sin, Christian-love, humility, and several relative duties, together with prayer and circumspection; and sends an account of the state of his own affairs at *Rome* by *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*, with salutations from several, of whom he gives high encomiums, and concludes with an order for this Epistle to be read by them, and by the church of *Laodicea*, and for giving a charge to *Archippus* to take heed to his ministry; and with his ordinary benediction, (*chap. iii. iv.*)

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle Paul salutes the Colossians, ver. 1, 2. Blesses God for their faith, love, and hope, which Epaphras had reported to him, 3,—8. Prays for their fruitfulness in spiritual knowledge, 9,—13. Gives a magnificent view of Christ, and of his grace to them to engage their adherence to him, 14,—23. And sets out his own character, as the apostle of the Gentiles, 24,—29.*

### TEXT.

**P**AUL an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and *Timotheus* our brother,

### PARAPHRASE.

**P**AUL, who is an apostle of Jesus Christ to bear a special witness to him, as having seen him since his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, (*1 Cor. xv. 8.* see the note there,) and who has not taken this office upon himself of his own head, nor was put into it by the authority of men; but was immediately called by Christ himself to fulfil it among the *Gentiles*, (*ver. 25,—27.*) not according to his own desires, but according to the free purpose, commandment and pleasure of God the Father, \* sends greeting: and the beloved *Timothy*, a faithful brother in the ministry, concurs in all that is hereafter written.

2 We

### N O T E.

\* The apostle asserts his being put into office, by the will of God the Father, the more effectually to obviate the objections of the false apostles against it; and he joins *Timothy* with himself, not to add to his own authority, but to strengthen *Timothy's* among

the *Colossians*; and he here with great modesty and prudence, calls him *his brother* rather than *his son*, that he might the better raise their regards to him. (Vid. *Zanchy* in loc. and the note on *1 Cor. i. 1.*)

2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse : Grace be unto you, and peace from our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We heartily join in Christian salutations to all the professing saints, whom we, in the judgment of charity, account to be holy persons, and whom we consider as sincere brethren in union with Christ, and faithful believers in him : we particularly mean all of these excellent characters that reside at the great city of *Colosse* in the province at *Phrygia*, and that ordinarily assemble for religious worship there. Our heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the divine favour, and all manner of prosperity, as its fruits and effects, may abound toward you from God, our common Father, the original fountain of all blessings ; and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has purchased all good things, that they might be freely given to you, in full consistence with the rights of divine justice ; and who, in concurrence with the Father, authoritatively and effectually confers them upon you.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you ;

3 We most affectionately unite in thanksgiving and praise to God on your behalf, whom we address, for the encouragement of our faith as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great and only Mediator ; and so, as our reconciled God and Father through him : and we on all occasions, present our supplications, together with our thanksgivings, to him for you in every prayer, (*Phil. i. 4.*)

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints ;

4 This we have done ever since we received an account of your cordially accepting of, and trusting in Christ alone for all salvation ; and were informed of the genuine fruits of your faith,—as manifested in the brotherly affection which ye have discovered various ways towards all the professors of his name, that bear his holy image, and so prove themselves to be sanctified by his Spirit.

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel ;

5 Our prayers and praises are thus engaged for you †, as your own faith and love also are to Christ and all the saints, in consideration of the perfect blessedness which ye justly hope for through him, and is laid up and hid with him in God, (*chap. iii. 3.*) as a rich treasure uses to be by a father for his children, and is reserved and secured in heaven for you ; which heavenly happiness ye heard of before now, when the gospel of your salvation, (*Ephes. i. 13.*) that true and faithful word of God, was first preached unto you.

6 Which is come unto you,

6 Which gospel, in the publication of it, has by the good providence of God been carried to you, without your

#### N O T E.

† For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven may denote, either the reason of the apostle's prayer and thanksgiving for them,

or of their faith in Christ, and love to all the saints, and therefore both senses are taken into the paraphrase.

as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and now the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the

your seeking after it, as it has been to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, all over the *Roman* empire, according to Christ's commission, (*Mark* xvi. 15.) and by the attending power of the Spirit, is an effectual means of making converts among them, and of their bringing forth the best of fruit, even faith, love, and obedience in them; as it likewise evidently doth in you, ever since ye were favoured with opportunities of hearing it, and were experimentally acquainted with a real work of divine grace in your own souls, and were led into the knowledge of the doctrine of the grace of God, and embraced it with a sincere faith, as the truth is in Jesus.

7 According to what ye also (*καθὼς καὶ*) were instructed in, particularly by your worthy minister, *Epaphras*, whom we own and esteem, as a dear brother and faithful labourer in the gospel-cause and kingdom of Christ, for his glory and the good of immortal souls; and who is in a special manner a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus, that seeks not yours, but you; and lays himself out, with conscientious care and diligence, for your spiritual benefit. (See the note on (*Phil.* ii. 25.)

8 And who, to testify his great affection to you, has taken an opportunity of acquainting us with your hearty love to Christ, to us, and to all the saints, which the Holy Spirit has wrought in you, and drawn forth in a spiritual manner, and on spiritual accounts, by means of the gospel.

9 In reflection therefore on the pleasing report that *Epaphras* has given of your faith and love, we have ever since been excited to bear you continually upon our hearts, in every solemn prayer; and, in a special manner, to beg of God for you, that ye may be yet more and more enlarged in, till your whole hearts are filled with the knowledge of his mind and will relating to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and to your own comfort and duty, as interested therein; that ye may abound exceedingly in a judicious, experimental and practical acquaintance with his manifold wisdom, which conducts his will; and in all spiritual discerning of spiritual things, as to their truth, excellence, and importance, and as to the good and holy use which ye ought to make of them.

10 That in the whole of your walk before God, according to his ordinances and commandments, and in all your conversation in the world, ye may continually behave as *becomes the gospel of Christ*, (*Phil.* i. 27.) and act up to the dignity of your relation to, and profession of

the knowledge of  
God;

of him and to the rich benefits ye have, and hope for from him; and every way agreeable to his holy nature and will, and acceptable in all things to him, by bringing forth every fruit of righteousness, like plants of the Lord's right hand planting, that he may be glorified, (*Isa. lxi. 3.*) and by being still more and more progressive in a transforming acquaintance and communion with God, as your heavenly Father and Friend.

11 Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;

11 We also pray that ye may be abundantly strengthened with all needful aids and assistances of his Spirit, for performing every duty and service, and for sustaining every trial and conflict, according to the working of his mighty power; which he exerts, like a God, in a glorious manner toward you, that ye may be enabled to exercise all patience, in a sweet composure of spirit, and possession of your own souls in peace, at all times, and under all afflictions, without any murmuring at the hand of God, or under the highest provocation from men; and may be helped to hold on your way, and hold out to the end, with a noble constancy and fortitude of soul, in submitting unto the will of God, and bearing injuries; and in doing all this with holy joy and triumph, in consideration of the great things that God has done for you, of his being continually with you, to support, strengthen and comfort you, and of the glory that is set before you.

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

12 This calls for praise, instead of complaints, under all your tribulations; and as ye ought to abound in that delightful tribute to the God of all your mercies; so we heartily join in the most grateful thanksgivings for you, as well as for ourselves, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father in him, who hath prepared and formed us for the heavenly state and world, (*2 Cor. v. 5.*) by working in us severally all spiritual, holy, and heavenly propensions and desires after, and fitness for the glorious inheritance which he has graciously appointed and provided for us, and has promised, and will give to us, as the inheritance of sons; an inheritance, which is all light, glory, and joy; and which, to allude to the sovereign manner of his disposing of the land of Canaan to Israel, he will give possession of, as it were by lot, to all those, and those only, that are sanctified by his Spirit here, and shall be all over covered with the light of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, in his immediate presence hereafter, where they shall see light in his light. (*Psal. xxxvi. 9.*)

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness;

13 Who has plucked us that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, as brands out of the fire; and rescued us with



darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

with a mighty hand, (*ἐκράτησεν*) like Lot, out of Sodom, from the tyranny and dominion of sin, which is darkness itself, (1 John i. 6.) and of Satan, (*Ἀττ* xv. 18.) who is the prince of darkness, and had taken us captive at his will: and this gracious God has wrought a happy change in our temper and state, by making us a willing people in the day of his power, (*Ἐφ* i. 3.) and bringing us into the kingdom of grace, which is created by, and is under the influence and government of, his eminently beloved Son, even the Son of his most peculiar and highest love, (*τὸν υἱὸν τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ*) in order to his advancing us to the kingdom of glory through him.

13 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

14 In whom we have the best of all deliverances, by the price of redemption, which he paid in shedding his precious blood, and giving his life a ransom for us, even a complete discharge from the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law, which includes, and brings after it, a deliverance from the power of sin and Satan, and from the wrath to come, that sin had deserved; as also an inheritance of all spiritual and eternal blessings, that sin had forfeited: and we may be well assured of the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood for this purpose, according to the riches of the Father's grace, (*Ἐφ* i. 7.. see the notes there,) from the dignity of his person, and the excellency of his office.

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

15 As to the dignity of his person, which adds an infinite value to his sacrifice, he, in his divine nature, is the exact likeness of the person of God the Father, as one in essence and perfections with him; and he accordingly, in his incarnation, and office-qualifications and performances, is the representative image of his Father, who being a pure Spirit, is absolutely invisible in his own nature; so that no man hath seen or can see him, (*Ἰω* i. 18.) and this divine person existed from all eternity, as having been in a peculiar inconceivable manner begotten \* of the Father, before any creature was brought into being; and is, inseparably with him, the former of all

#### N O T E.

\* The words, (*πρωτότοκος πάντων κτισμάτων*) render'd the first-born of every creature, signify also born, or begotten before all creation: Or (as *Isidore* an ancient Greek writer observed) if the accent of the word (*πρωτότοκος*) be placed on the last syllable but one, instead of the last but two, it signifies not passively, the first-begotten, but actively the first begetter, or former of all things; and in proof of Christ's being so, it is added in the next words, For by him were all things created; and *ver* 17, it

is said, not that he was made, but that he is before all things. (*Vid. Ἰσίδ. lib. 4. epist. 31.*) In the first way of understanding this passage, according to our translation, it relates to Christ's office, as head of the church: In the second, it relates to what is usually called the eternal generation of the Son: In the third, it relates to his being the efficient cause, or the Creator of all things; and in all these views he is considered in the following verses.

all things; and consequently the original Lord and Heir of all according to the antient rights of the first-born.

16 For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.

16 For by him, as the efficient cause, together with the Father and Spirit, all things, that are not God, were brought forth out of nothing into being, (see the notes on *John* i. 3.) even all creatures, that are in the heaven of heavens, and in the starry heaven and the air, and that inhabit or belong to the earth and sea; all visible and invisible things whatsoever; all the highest ranks and individuals of angels in heaven, and of men upon earth, whether, for dignity and authority in those respective worlds †, they be stiled *thrones*, in allusion to the royal seats of princes; or *dominions*, that have rule and government committed to them under any form whatsoever; or *principalities*, that are in high and noble stations; or *powers*, that are great in any kind of authority and influence: yea, and all inferior as well as higher orders of creatures, down to the smallest atom, were brought into being by his creating power, as their original cause: and all of them, from the highest to the lowest, were created for him, as their ultimate end; that he, together with the Father and Spirit, might one way or other be glorified in, and by them, as they are the works of his hand, and shall be made subservient to the designs of his mediatorial kingdom.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

17 And this carries an undeniable demonstration, that he had a prior existence to all creatures whatsoever: and as we are said to *live, move, and have our being in God*, (*Acts* xvii. 28.); so all things do alike subsist, stand or continue in him, (*17 note*) who is omnipresent, all-powerful, and active, in his providential influence over them; as they are continually preserved in being, and in their regular frame and order, and are animated and upheld, by the same *word of his power*, (*Heb.* i. 3.) which at first called them into existence, and which he now exerts, as Head over all things to the church. (*Ephes.* i. 22.)

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning; the first-born from the dead, that in all things

18 And as to the *excellency of his office* in human nature, which he assumed into personal union with himself, this same great and glorious person is not only the political head of direction, authority, and government, in like manner as a king is the head of the state; but he

#### N O T E.

† *Thrones, dominions, principalities and powers* are terms often used to signify the highest orders of angels; and, perhaps, may here most immediately design them: But as they are also used to signify the highest ranks

of men, it still further widens the argument, and, I think, there can be no impropriety in it, if we also include them. (See *Dr Hammond's* note here.)

things he might have the pre-eminence.

he is also the head of vital influence, by his word and spirit, to the church, (which is as intimately united to him as the natural body is to its head) to communicate all spiritual life, nourishment, growth and activity to all, and every member of it, the whole of which spiritual body is the relative *fulness of him that filleth all in all*, (Eph. i. 22, 23.) he accordingly is the head and original, (*αρχη*) as of the spiritual life of their souls, so of the resurrection of their bodies to eternal life; being himself the first that arose from the dead to immortal life, and *that* by his own power, as the pledge and pattern, quickning cause and first-fruits of the resurrection of all those that sleep in him, (1 Cor. xv. 20; see the notes there,) and he is thus the Lord of the dead and the living, (Rom. xiv. 9.) that he in all things might be preferred, exalted and dignified of God, and esteemed by the church, in his mediatorial capacity (as he really is in himself) above all angels, and above all the saints, whom he condescends to call his brethren. (Rom. viii. 29.)

19 For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;

19 For, in the œconomy of salvation, it has seemed good in God the Father's sight, and he of his own infinitely wise, gracious and holy pleasure, and in honour to his Son, and in love to his people, has ordained, that, correspondent to the excellency of Christ's divine person, and the greatness of his mediatorial work †, an all-fulness of gifts and graces, merit and righteousness, light and power, should dwell permanently in him, with the utmost perfection, not for himself only, but likewise to be communicated to every member of his spiritual body, *that of his fulness they all may receive grace for grace*, (John i. 16.) and that he may *fill all things*, and be *all in all*, (Ephes. i. 23. and iv. 10.)

20 And having made peace thro' the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

20 And God the Father, (having, through the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, (ver. 14.) which he shed in his painful, shameful and accursed death of the cross, removed the enmity, and made up the breach, which sin had caused between him and his church) it hath pleased him, by this their Head and Mediator, to bring them all into a state of friendship and

#### N O T E.

† This *all fulness*, which dwells in Christ, seems evidently to signify, not the original fulness of his deity, but his mediatorial dispensatory fulness which he received of his Father in his human nature and office-capacity; for his original fulness is *essentially necessary to him*, and inseparable from him, as God, and does not depend upon the mere good-will and pleasure of the Father; but the fulness, here mentioned, is what we are told *it pleased the*

*Father should dwell in him*, and is placed amidst that part of the apostle's description of him which relates most immediately to his office-character; and the expressions used chap. ii. 9. to signify the inhabitation of the deity in the man Jesus, is much stronger, and without any hint of *will and pleasure*, at the cause of it, where it is said, *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. (see the note there.)

and favour with himself †: It has been, I say, the good pleasure of his will to reconcile them to himself, by the peace-making sacrifice of Christ, that the righteous demands of his broken law and offended justice might not be executed upon them; but that he might honourably act toward them in a way of kindness and friendship, according to the riches of his love and grace; whether they be believers among *Jews* or *Gentiles* on earth, or glorified saints, that in the virtue of his blood already are, or ever shall be in heaven.

21 And you that were sometime alienated, and

21, 22 And in consequence of this, ye, who heretofore, in the days of your unregeneracy, were estranged

#### N O T E.

† *God's reconciling all things to himself, whether in earth, or in heaven, does not, I apprehend, include the holy angels, who having never sinned, cannot be said to be reconciled to God; but relates only to all the saints, whether on earth, or in heaven, who needed to be reconciled after the breach that sin had made between God and them.*—

When the scripture speaks of reconciliation by Christ, or by his cross, blood, or death, it is commonly expressed by God's reconciling us to himself, and not by his being reconciled to us; the reason of which seems to be, because God is the *offended* party, and we are the *offenders*, who, as such, have need to be reconciled to him; and the price of reconciliation, by the blood of Christ, is paid to him, and not to us. *Grotius* observes, that in heathen authors, *men's being reconciled to their gods*, is always understood to signify appealing the anger of their gods. Condemned rebels may be said to be reconciled to their sovereign, when he, on one consideration or another, pardons them; though, perhaps, they still remain rebels in their hearts against him: And when our Lord ordered the *OFFENDING* to go and be reconciled to his *OFFENDED* brother, (Matth. v. 23, 24.) the plain meaning is, that he should go, and try to appease his anger, obtain his forgiveness, and regain his favour and friendship, by humbling himself to him, asking his pardon, or satisfying him for any injury that he might have done him. In like manner, *God's reconciling us to himself* by the cross of Christ, does not signify, as the *Scythians* contend, our being reconciled, by *conversion*, to a religious turn in our hearts to God: But it is a reconciliation that results from God's graciously providing and accepting an atonement for us, that he might not inflict the punishment upon us which we deserved, and the law condemned us to; but might be at peace with us, and receive us into favour, on Christ's account: For this reconciliation, by the *cross of Christ*, is in a way of atonement or satisfaction to divine justice for sin; and,

with respect herunto, we are said to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, while we were enemies, which is of much the same import with Christ's dying for the ungodly, and while we were yet sinners, (Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.) And our being reconciled to God, by approving and accepting of his method of reconciliation by Jesus Christ, and, on that encouragement, turning to him, is distinguished from "his reconciling us to himself, and not imputing our trespasses to us," on account of "Christ's having been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 18,—21.) This is called Christ's "making reconciliation for iniquity, and making reconciliation for the sins of the people," (Dan. ix. 24. and Heb. ii. 17.) and answers to the ceremonial and typical reconciliation which was made by the blood of the sacrifices under the law, to make atonement and reconciliation for Israel. (2 Cor. xix. 24. and Ezek. xlv. 15, 17.); and which was frequently styled, *making atonement for sin, and an atonement for the faults*. Now as all the legal sacrifices of atonement, and the truly expiatory sacrifice of Christ, were offered, not to the offenders, but to God, to reconcile him to them; what can reconciliation by the death, blood, or cross of Christ, mean, but that the law and justice of God were thereby satisfied, and all obstructions, on his part, to peace and friendship toward sinners are removed, that he might not pursue his righteous demands upon them, according to the holy retributions of his nature and will, and the threatenings of his law, for their sins; but might mercifully forgive them, and take them into a state of favour with himself, upon their receiving the atonement, or (*καταλλάξιν*) reconciliation, (Rom. v. 11.) by faith, after the offence that sin had given him, and the breach it had made upon the original friendship between him and them? (Vid. *Grot. de Satisf. Cap. vii. and Dr Owen's answer to Biddle's Catechism. &c. Chap. xxix.*)

and enemies in our mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled,

22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblemished, and irreproachable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister:

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions

ged from the life of God, and, thro' the perverse reasonings of your own corrupt minds, were full of enmity to him, and discovered yourselves to be, and actually became more and more so, by an habitual course of wicked practices, in contradiction to him, and to his holy law, (*Rom. viii. 7.*) he has now, upon your believing in Christ, brought into a state of reconciliation, peace and friendship with himself, by the human body of Christ, which consisted of flesh and blood, like the bodies of other men, even through the merit and efficacy of his atoning death, who his own self bore your sins in his own body on the tree, (*1 Pet. ii. 24.*) that he might present you to himself, or make you stand before him, as pure and holy members of his church, without spot or blemish, (*Eph. v. 27.*) and that nothing may be found to bring you under condemnation, or reproof in his sight, as the great Judge of all, or in the sight of God, at the last day.

23 This, I am well satisfied, will be the happy event as to you \*, since ye have given evident proof of your being sincere believers, by your steadfastly persevering in the faith of Christ, as persons that are built on him as your foundation, and are firmly established in your dependence alone on him; and so maintain your ground against all the artful and violent attempts of your enemies to shake and carry you off from Christ, the object of your hope, and from your hope in him, as set before you in the gospel, which ye have heard, attended to and received, and which, according to the true intent of our Lord's commission, (*Mark xvi. 15.*) has been preached promiscuously to *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, under what quarter of the heavens soever they dwell, (see the note on *ver. 28.*) and I, *Paul*, am highly favoured with his special commission to communicate this gospel particularly to the *Gentiles*, (*Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18.*)

24 And seeing ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, *ver. 23.* I now, instead of repining at the severe persecutions and present imprisonments, that have befallen me for your sakes, on account of my preaching

# N O T E.

\* If ye continue might be, more agreeable to the apostle's design, rendered *since ye continue*; for the particle (*ὅτι*) often signifies *since*, as in *2 Cor. v. iii.* (see the note there, and *ye continue* (*ἐκτείνετε*) is not in the future, but present tense, intimating what they did at present, or hitherto; and, (as Mr Pierce observes in his note here) this sense is necessary, because of the new (*νυν*) in the next

verse, and because the apostle speaks of his "joying and beholding their steadfastness in the faith of Christ." (*chap. ii. 5.*) and so no argument can be drawn from hence against the perseverance of the saints; or for making their continuing in the faith the cause of their being presented unrepentable at the great day.

of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church:

preaching the gospel to *Gentile* sinners, (*Eph.* iii. 1.) do, on the contrary, even rejoice in them, and count them my honour, (*Acts* v. 41.) as they also are your glory, (*Eph.* iii. 13.) and instead of persecuting others, as formerly \*, I, in my turn, now cheerfully undergo all manner of tribulations, which still remain for filling up the measure of my sufferings for Christ's glory, as he filled up the measure of his sufferings for my redemption; and which I am further to endure in my natural body, after his example, and in his cause, who counts them his own, and has appointed them to me for the benefit of his mystical body, by which I mean his church, that they may be confirmed in the faith of the gospel, and encouraged to bear, with undaunted bravery, whatever sufferings they may be called to undergo for it, by seeing how I am enabled to behave with holy fortitude, patience and joy under mine.

25 Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

25 Of which church (†) I am, by his immediate authority, constituted a minister in my apostolic office, according to the infinitely gracious and holy (*οικονομιαν*) order of God's settling in his family, for dispensing the gospel, which is committed to me, as a sacred trust, with a special regard to you as *Gentiles*, (*Eph.* iii. 1, 2. and 1 *Tim.* i. 11, 12.) for your conversion, edification and salvation, to fulfil his prophetic word about his calling the *Gentiles*; (*Is.* xi. 10. and xlii. 1. *Zech.* ii. 11. and *Mal.* i. 11.)

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from

26 Which is indeed a mystery, both as it contains the unsearchable riches of Christ, (*Eph.* iii. 8. †) and

as

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\* *Fill up* (*ἀναπληρῶν*) says *Le Clerk*, and *Mr Pierce* after him, in a beautiful criticism on the place, signifies *fill up by turns*, to intimate, that the apostle now suffered in his turn, as he had formerly made others suffer for Christ in theirs: And I am apt to think, that, in calling these the *afflictions of Christ*, he might recollect Christ's saying to him, in the career of his persecutions, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (*Acts* ix. 4.) or, according to the above given sense of the word translated *fill up*, he might mean that, as Christ had suffered for his redemption, he now in his turn suffered for Christ's glory, and in conformity to him, as *sufferings for Christ* are manifestly to be understood in 2 *Cor.* i. 5. and 1 *Pet.* iv. 13: But I do not find, on the strictest search, that Christ's own sufferings are any where called, as here, his *afflictions*, (*ἐνδολεαὶ τῷ Χριστῷ*) while this word is commonly used, through the New Testament, to express the sufferings of the apostles and other Christians for Christ's sake; nor can any of their sufferings be supposed to

be added to his, or to concur with his, for the satisfaction of divine justice, without overthrowing the perfection of his atoning sacrifice, who, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (*Heb.* x. 14.)

† *Mystery* here, as in several other places, relates to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which was before, at least comparatively speaking, a mystery, but is now most clearly revealed: And yet as there were many plain and express prophecies of this under the Old Testament, a vast collection of which is made, and compared with correspondent New Testament texts, by the learned *Huet*, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, (*Vid. Prop.* 9. Cap. 158. p. 589.—597.) It cannot be said not to have been revealed before, though, through mistaken prejudices, it was not generally understood, in its true sense and meaning: And therefore its being called a *Mystery* seems, not only to carry the idea of its having lain under great obscurity before; (which I apprehend is to be considered with reference to the doctrines of the gospel itself, as well as

from ages, and  
from generations,  
it is now made  
manifest to his  
saints :

as it has been so far concealed, especially in its brightest glories, from ages and generations under the law, that the *Gentiles* knew nothing of it, and the *Jews* did not fully understand the notices that were given of it under former dispensations; but which is now as clearly revealed as the nature of things admits of, (*τὸν ἀγνῶσκει αὐτὸν*) to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, (*Eph. iii. 5.*) and, through them, to all true believers, who, by profession, obligation and regenerating grace, are his saints.

27 To whom  
God would make  
known what is  
the riches of the  
glory of this my-  
stery among the  
*Gentiles*; which  
Christ in you  
the hope of glory:

27 To whom God, of his own good pleasure, according to his eternal purpose, and ancient predictions, would now, under the New Testament-dispensation, make a plain discovery of the exceeding riches of the glory of this incomprehensibly excellent gospel, even among the *Gentiles*, which is all summ'd up in Christ, who, as preached among you, and as dwelling in your hearts by his Spirit and by faith, is become the author and ground of all your hopes of eternal life, as well as is the purchaser of all its glory.

28 Whom we  
preach, warning  
every man, and  
teaching every  
man in all wis-  
dom; that we  
may present every  
man perfect in  
Christ Jesus:

28 This is the blessed Saviour, whom we, as messengers of the best tidings that ever were brought to the sons of men, declare, and make the grand subject of our ministry, in his glorious person and offices, in the whole compass of his mediation, and in the believing, affectionate and obedient regards, that are due to him, and to God the Father through him; admonishing all sorts of persons to reflect upon their sinful and obnoxious state by nature, and to take heed of rejecting him\*; and instructing them, without distinction of nations, wheresoever we come, according to the wisdom that God hath given us; and leading them into the knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God, as display'd in the gospel-revelation, to make them wise to salvation; that we may by the means and instruments of presenting them all to God, as true and uncorrupted believers, that are espoused to Christ, (*2 Cor. xi. 2.*) and well acquainted with the whole scheme of the gospel, and that have, not only a perfection of parts, which belong to the new creature, but an eminent growth

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to its being preached to the *Gentiles*); but also of the unfathomable depths of wisdom and grace that are contained in the gospel, as now revealed in the plainest manner that it ever will be in this world, or that our faculties in this imperfect state are capable of taking in. (See the note on 1 Cor. ii. 7.)

\* Every man, as mentioned three times over in this verse, and every creature which is under heaven, ver. 23. cannot be supposed to

mean all the individuals of mankind; but evidently signifies (according to the drift of the apostle's argument and the frequent use of these universal terms in the New Testament) *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom he preached Christ and the gospel, that he might present them perfect in him, without distinction of nations, or preference of one sort of them to another.

growth of them; and are already perfect in their Head Christ, (see the note on 1 Cor. ii. 6.) and shall be perfected in all knowledge and grace, holiness and happiness, through him, in the heavenly state.

29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

29 To the accomplishment of this, I also labour with pains and diligence in prayer and preaching, laying myself out to the utmost by all means, amidst all difficulties, and in the face of all opposition, like the vehement contenders in the *Grecian* games, (*αγωνισμους*) according to the energy of his spirit and grace, which works with mighty power in me, to enable me for it, and with me, to crown my labours with glorious success. (See the note on 1 Cor. xv. 10.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a divine authority does the apostolic character give to Paul's epistles! And with what affection should we, after his example, with all boundings of grace and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to all the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus! And how should we bless God on their behalf, and recommend them in our prayers to him on account of what we see or hear of their faith and love, and of their well grounded hope of that eternal life which is reserved in heaven for them, according to the truth of the gospel! What a mercy is it, that this gospel is now preached, by divine commission, to Gentiles, as well as Jews, in all its unsearchably glorious riches, which was a mystery concealed in great obscurity from former ages; but is now, as far as the nature of things admits, clearly manifested to the saints! But how much greater is the mercy still, to know this gospel of the grace of God in truth; to experience its efficacy, in delivering us from the power of Satan, and translating us into the kingdom of God's best beloved Son; and to have Christ dwelling in our hearts, as our hope of glory! This encourages further prayers for all increase in light, and grace, and strengthenings, by the glorious operations of divine power, unto all patience, long-suffering, and joy, under all the trials of this life, and unto all becoming, fruitful, and holy walking with God, who in this way will make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. How great and glorious is the person of Christ! He is the essential and representative image of God the Father, who in his own nature is invisible; he had an eternal existence before all worlds, and is the Creator and Upholder, the first cause and last end of all things, from the highest to the lowest of them, in heaven and earth; he also, as Mediator, is the head of his mystical body the church; has all office and dispensatory fulness constantly residing in him; and is the first and chief that rose from the dead to immortal life, and every way super-eminent to all saints and angels. And how important are the benefits that his church receive from him! They that were sometimes enemies, through the iniquity of their hearts and lives, are now reconciled to God by his atoning death, and have remission of sins through his redeeming blood; and they are kept steadfast in the faith and hope of the gospel, till at length they shall be presented faultless, and without rebuke, in the sight of God. And what an honour is it to be made wise and faithful preachers of Christ, and instruments of presenting multitudes perfect in him! Who would not willingly lay themselves out to the utmost, according to the powerful workings of his grace in, and with them, to subserve this blessed design; and rather rejoice than repine at any sufferings, to what degree soever they may be called to undergo them in the cause of Christ, for his sake, and for the conversion, edification, and eternal salvation of many souls!



## C H A P. II.

The apostle expresses his love to, and joy in believers, whom he had never seen, and encourages their continuing to walk in Christ, 1,—7. Cautions them against the errors of heathen-philosophy, against the vanity of Jewish traditions, and against an observance of Mosaic rites, which had been completely fulfilled in Christ, beyond what they could hope to find elsewhere, 8,—17. Against worshipping of angels, as that were, in effect, renouncing their Head, Christ, 18, 19. And against legal ordinances and human institutions, that are of no advantage for spiritual purposes, 20,—23.

## TEXT.

FOR I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh :

1 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ ;

3 In whom are hid all the treasures

## PARAPHRASE.

IT is with a particular reference to you, that I speak of my earnest endeavour to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, (*chap. i. 28, 29.*) For I would fain make you sensible of my great solicitude, concern, and fervent prayers for you, (*chap. i. 9.*) the believers at Colosse, and for those of your neighbouring city of Laodicea ; and even for all that have received the faith of Christ, wherever they reside, though they, like you, have never had the opportunity of seeing me in the body, nor consequently of attending on my ministry, and being wrought upon by it.

2 I wrestle with God in prayer for all such, that their hearts may be abundantly filled with divine consolation, as believers that are closely and firmly cemented together in the bonds of the most cordial affection to Christ and one another ; and are thoroughly united in endeavours for attaining a distinct, clear, and complete acquaintance with the excellent scheme of the gospel, in all its riches of spiritual and eternal blessings, unto the entire satisfaction of their own souls ; and unto the most honourable, steady, and public profession of these deep things of God, which, though now revealed for the salvation of the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, continue to be *unsearchable riches*, (*Eph. iii. 8.*) that were from all eternity designed, and prepared in the gracious counsels of God the Father's will, (*Eph. i. 11.*) and are purchased, revealed, and dispensed by our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Mediator between God and them.

3 In whom \*, as the Head of the church, are contained, for their use and benefit, beyond their comprehension

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\* In whom (*iv. 6.*) may be render'd in which, den and knowledge, relating to salvation, are wrapp'd up, and contain'd in this mystery : But I must take it to be meant of Christ, who

store of wisdom  
and knowledge.

hension, and with a concealment from carnal minds, all the rich and inexhaustible treasures of perfect wisdom and knowledge, for managing all the affairs of his kingdom of providence and grace, and seasonably supplying all our wants; and for revealing the whole will of God about our salvation; as also for enlightening our minds, and directing us in our way and walk through all the darkness and dangers of this life, and conducting us safe to heavenly glory.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

4 And I thus speak of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are laid up in Christ, from the deep concern of my heart for you, that ye may be established in him; lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve thro' his subtilty, (2 Cor. xi. 3) so, through the plausible insinuations of judaizing teachers, who by false reasonings, flattering words and fair speeches, lye in wait to deceive, (1 Cor. xvi. 18. and Eph. iv. 14.) any one should delude you into insnaring notions, that are contrary to, or derogatory from Christ and his glory, and would turn you off from him, and from the pure doctrine of salvation alone through him: my knowledge of your affairs, and affection to you, engage this solicitous care of my soul about you.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

5 For though I be corporally distant from you, and never saw you; yet my heart is with you, in delightful reflections on what I have heard of your faith, love, and hope, (chap. i. 4, 5.) and I clearly perceive, by suggestions of the Spirit, how things are with you, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 3.) as to your rich attainments, on one hand, and trials of various kinds on the other; and I am filled with sacred joy from what I know of your circumstances, as if I were personally present with you, particularly with respect to the good discipline that is kept up among you, as a church of Christ, and the orderly behaviour of its several members; and with respect to the firm, solid, and steady adherence of your faith to the person, mediation and doctrines of Christ, notwithstanding all the artifices that are used to corrupt your minds, and draw you off from him.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

6 As therefore ye have received Christ by faith in his person and offices, as your prophet to teach you, as your priest to make atonement and intercede for you, and as your king to rule and govern you, even as your com-

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who is the nearest antecedent, and is spoken of ver. 9, 10. as having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, in whom the church is complete. (See also Dr Whitby's note here.) And *hid in him* intimates, (says Bi-

shop Davenant on the place) that these treasures of wisdom and knowledge are so hid, as not to be discerned by carnal men, but only by those to whom God hath given spiritual eyes to see them.

complete Lord and Saviour; so I intreat and exhort you still to cleave with purpose of heart to him, and to walk in a daily exercise of faith in him, and in a constant observation of all his ordinances and commandments; yea, in all holy conversation and godliness, as becomes your profession of him, and relation to him, by virtue of your union with him, and by derivation of grace from him;

7 Rooted and hoilt up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

7 As sincere believers, who, like a tree planted in a good soil, are rooted in Christ, fastening on him, to keep you fixed and immoveable by any wind of doctrine, and drawing nourishment from him for your spiritual growth in him, (*Eph. iv. 14, 15.*); and who, like a house erected on a solid foundation, are built upon Christ, and closely united to him, as the only foundation of your faith and hope, security and salvation, (*1 Cor. iii. 11.*) that ye may grow unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye are built together for an habitation of God, thro' the Spirit, (*Eph. ii. 21, 22.*) and that ye may be confirmed both in the doctrine and grace of faith in him, according to what ye have heard, and received by the ministry of *Epaphras*, our dear fellow-servant, (*chap. i. 7.*) and may abound exceedingly in daily increases of light and faith, and every other grace, with enlarged thankfulness and praise to the author and finisher of all that concerns you.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

8 Take heed lest any seducer make a prey of you, and draw you off from Christ and his pure gospel; and rob you of its privileges and blessings, through the subtilties and corruptions of the false philosophy of the heathens, which *Jewish* doctors have adopted into their religion; and through their fallacious pretences, which are all empty, delusive, and vain, as they puff up the mind with a conceit of things, that have nothing in them; and mislead it to follow the uncertain traditions, that were the inventions of men in former ages, and have been handed down from one generation to another to this very day; and also to observe such ceremonial rites of the *Mosaic* law, as were the principles, or first elements (*στοιχεῖα*) of the church in its infant state, and were in themselves of a carnal nature, as suited to impress little children by worldly appearances, (see the paraphrase on *Gal. iv. 3.*); and none of those things are according to the mind and will of Christ, as revealed in the gospel; nor do any of them, as now urged and observed, lead the soul to him alone for salvation, who has an all-sufficiency for it in himself.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

9 For the divine nature†, with all the perfections of deity in their utmost fulness, reside, and for ever abide, substantially in his incarnate person, as in the temple of his body, inhabited by the indwelling Godhead, in a personal, and infinitely more glorious manner, than it ever dwelt in the *Jewish* tabernacle, or temple of old.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

10 And ye, who have received him by faith, (*ver. 6.*) and so are united to him as members of his mystical body, have all salvation in him as your head; ye have all defects made up, and all securities and blessings completed, though not already in your own persons, yet in him, who is made unto you of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, (*1 Cor. i. 30.*) and who, suitable to the dignity of his divine person, as *all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him*, (*ver. 9.*) is exalted in his office-capacity to be sovereign Lord and Ruler of all ranks and degrees of mankind; yea, of all, even the highest orders of apostate angels, who are under his controul, as vanquish'd enemies, (*ver. 15.*) and of all the holy angels, that excel in strength, and are entirely under his dominion, who sends them forth to minister to the heirs of salvation, (*Heb. i. 14.*)

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ:

11 In him also ye are so complete, as to have no need of the ordinance of circumcision, which the *Jewish* zealots would impose upon you; for ye have a better circumcision of the heart, according to God's promise to his people, and their seed, (*Deut. xxx. 6.*) even a spiritual circumcision, (*Phil. iii. 3.*) which is not effected, like that in the flesh, by the work of human hands,

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† *The Godhead, the fulness of the Godhead, and all the fulness of the Godhead*, are as strong expressions as can well be imagined, to denote that the divine nature, with not some only, but all its essential perfections, the very same as are in the Father himself, dwell substantially in Christ's human body, as the word (*συνέστηκεν*) may signify, either bodily, to intimate the personal union of the divine nature with the human body, as well as soul of our Lord, when he, the eternal Word, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (*John i. 1, 14.* see the note there) or really and substantially, in opposition to figuratively and emblematically, in types and shadows, in which sense the apostle says *the body is of Christ*, (*ver. 17.*) And this is infinitely more than any thing that is said of God's dwelling in his people, (*2 Cor. vi. 16.*) and of their being filled with all the fulness of God. (*Eph. iii. 19.*) His dwelling in them evidently signi-

fies only his gracious presence with them, in a way of special favour and relation, manifestation and operation; and their being filled with all the fulness of God, (*πληροὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ*) most naturally means, filled with all the gifts and graces that God is the author and giver of: But *all the fulness of the Godhead* (*πληρὸς τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Θεοῦ*) is a quite different phrase of inconceivably superior signification: For Godhead is the one only divine nature itself, by which God is what he is; and as all acts of divine goodness, wisdom, and power, and the like, are constantly ascribed to God, and never, as far as I can recollect, to the Godhead, there seems to be a great impropriety of language in calling their effects the fulness of the Godhead. But the fulness, or perfection of Deity, is a natural idea of all that is comprehended in Godhead; and all this is said to dwell in Christ.

hands, but by the renewing operation of the Spirit; and consists, not in cutting off the foreskin of the flesh, but in what was signified by it, even a separation of the whole-body of sin, which, like the natural body, is made up of many members or parts, that spring from the corruption of nature, and are influenced, and exert themselves, by means of the fleshly body, that ye may be delivered from its guilt, power, and defilement, and at length from the very in being of it, by virtue of that spiritual circumcision which Christ is the author of †.

11 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

12 And, instead of circumcision in the flesh, ye have by his institution the ordinance of baptism, which is of like signification, and answers the same ends, as 'tis a sign of, and obligation to all the holiness, that is, or ought to be found in you, as God's covenant people, by your being conformable to Christ's death, in utterly dying to sin, and giving full evidence of it with continuance, as he died that it might be crucified, and was manifested to be entirely dead, by his being buried, and continuing some time in the grave\*. Your privileges and obligations are likewise signified in his ordinance, as to your being quickened and raised to a life of holiness, in conformity to the risen Saviour, through that faith which is wrought with almighty energy in your hearts, by the same exceeding greatness of God's power, (*Eph. i. 19, 20.*) which he exerted in raising Christ from the dead; and will put forth, by virtue of his resurrection, in raising you up to eternal life, (*Rom. viii. 11.* and *1 Pet. i. 3.*

13 And

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† The circumcision of Christ cannot mean his own circumcision in the flesh, the eight day; for *that*, as much as any other, was made by the hands of men; but *this* is said, in opposition to that sort of circumcision to be made without hands, and refers to that spiritual circumcision, of which Christ is the author, and of which, as circumcision formerly was, the baptism of Christ's institution now is the sign; it signifying *not the putting away the flesh of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*, (*1 Pet. iii. 21.*); and so, the signification being the same, baptism comes in the room of circumcision, according to what is intimated in the next verse, as the Lord's supper does of the passover. And this effectually answered the objection of Jewish zealous, as if, whatever internal privileges were pretended to, there were a defect as to external ordinances, for want of circumcision to signify and seal them: For the apostle herein shews, that Christ has

not only provided that his people should be partakers of the thing signified by it, but has also substituted another external ordinance, of like use, signification, and design, to be continued under the gospel state, more suitable to its simplicity and spiritual nature. But if the infants of believing parents were not to be baptized, under the gospel-dispensation, a strong objection would still have remained against their being complete in Christ, as to external privileges, since the children of the Israelites, under the Mosaic dispensation, were to be circumcised as well as themselves.

\* Buried with him, seems to relate rather to Christ's burial, than to our baptism. And buried with him in baptism, stands in opposition to being dead in sin, ver. 13. and is of the same import with being crucified with him, *and dead with him*, as appears by comparing *Rom. vi. 4, 6, 8.* where these terms are used signifying the same thing. (See also the note on *Rom. vi. 4.*)

13 And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

13 And ye, who in your unregenerate state were dead in law, under a just sentence of condemnation, on account of your trespasses; and were dead toward God, and every thing that is spiritually good, in the disposition of your hearts, under the power of corrupt nature, which was signified during the *Mosaic* dispensation, by your being uncircumcised in the flesh, he has now raised to a new life of grace and holiness, in order to a heavenly life of glory and blessedness, together with Christ, as your Head, by quickening virtue derived from him, and in conformity to his resurrection from the dead; God having, on his account, freely forgiven you all and every one of your iniquities, whether they be original or actual, greater or lesser sins, that none of them might be imputed to you, or bind the curse of the law upon you, or be brought into judgment against you, though ye never have been literally circumcised; and therefore that ordinance cannot be necessary to your pardon and acceptance with God to eternal life.

14 Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was

14 Yea, as a debt is evidently remitted, or discharged, by crossing and obliterating the book, or bond †, or any writing

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† Here is a manifest allusion to various ways of cancelling a debt, and vacating a bond, in a beautiful gradation from blotting it out, to taking it quite away, and utterly destroying it, that there might be no room for fear of its ever appearing, or being any more in force against us: And the last of these, which is expressed by *erasing* it to the cross of Christ, may allude both to his crucifixion, which disarmed the law of its condemning power, and death of its sting; and (as *Grotius* observes) to an ancient custom of striking an antiquated writing through with a nail, to deface it, and render it for ever invalid. "The hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was 'contrary to us,' &c. and was thus effectually disannulled, I take to include the whole law of *Moses*, as a covenant, though with a primary respect to the ceremonial law: But the *moral*, as well as ceremonial law, might be called 'the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us,' as it was written by the appointment of God, and practically subscribed to by *Israel*, (*Deut. v. 27.*); and both together contained an acknowledgment of their guilt, depravity, and obnoxiousness to wrath, and of their need of a better sacrifice and purification than the ceremonial law could afford, which included an obligation to observe the moral law, that was written by the finger of God; and, upon failure of obedience, subjected them to its curse, and so was a 'ministration of death' and condemnation, (*1 Cor. iii. 7, 9.*); and

in that view, the *Jews* were most immediately concerned in it: And yet the doctrine contained in it affected the *Gentiles* (whose consciences convicted them of sin) as well as the *Jews*. It therefore seems to have been with special design, that the apostle alters the *person* in this verse from you to us, to intimate, that the benefit, brought in by Christ, related in common to believers of both sorts, and that it is not to be confined to *Gentiles*, as some understand it, who consider the ceremonial law only, as said to be contrary to them, by excluding them from the privileges and blessings of the *Jews*. But had this been the apostle's precise and restrictive intention, it is very strange that, while he was speaking of *Gentiles* in the second *person* all along just before, and returned to speak of them in the same manner at ver. 6. and so on to the end of the epistle, he should vary the *person* here, and that without any apparent reason for it, when it would have been most evidently proper and accurate to have continued it without any alteration.—For this reason, therefore, among others relating to what equally concerned them both, I cannot readily go into the interpretation, that makes this passage relate *merely* to the contrariety of the ceremonial law to the *Gentiles*, though that be included in it, as it was a middle wall of partition between them and the *Jews*. (*Viñ. Zanch. in loc. and Wits. de Delect. V. l. ad. calc. Oecum. Ford. p. 318, 319.*)

was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross:

writing that stood against the debtor; so, with regard to all of us who believe, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, he has blotted out our transgressions, as it were by the red lines of Christ's blood, and thereby disannulled the law-obligation to punishment for them which testified against us all, as transgressors, as well as separated the *Gentiles* from the church and privileges of the *Jews*, and was the cause of enmity between them: He has also removed it out of the way, that it may never be found, and produced, or brought into dispute against us: And that it might be utterly nullified, as a bond that stood out against us, he has, as it were, rent and torn it to pieces, by nailing it to the cross, on which our Lord was fastened by the nails that pierced him through his hands and feet, when he died our sacrifice, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. (Gal. iii. 13.)

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of

15 And having vanquished, and disarmed all the powers of darkness, the devil their chief, and all the ranks and orders of apostate spirits with him \*, He,

as

# N O T E.

\* Mr *Pearce*, in a large note on this text, has endeavoured to establish a new notion, as tho' by the *principalities and powers*, here spoken of, were meant, not the *evil*, but *good angels*. There is great ingenuity in the conjecture, and much labour employed in criticism to maintain it. But, upon the most careful examination, it does not appear to me to be sufficiently supported: For, admitting that he spoiled *principalities and powers* is not predicted of *Christ*, but of *God the Father*, 'tis most naturally to be understood of what the Father did by *Christ*, in his triumphant death; and yet, as *Christ's* cross, mentioned in the close of the foregoing verse, is the immediate antecedent to this, it seems plain and easy enough to refer the *spoiling of principalities and powers* to him, as what he himself has done, by his sufferings and death, in obtaining the conquest over them. And as to its connection with the context, which this learned writer thinks cannot be made out, but upon his interpretation, what can be more agreeable to the apostle's design to prove, that believers are *complete in Christ*, (ver. 10.) than to show that they are not only partakers of the the spiritual circumcision, which is signified by the New Testament-ordinance of baptism, and are quickened with *Christ*, and forgiving all trespasses, and acquitted from law-obligations that stood in force against them; but that all the powers of darkness are also entirely vanquished for them by his cross? And what the apostle had said, ver. 10. about *Christ's* being the

head of all principality and power, is a sufficient reason against *worshipping of angels*, ver. 18. 19. This gentleman, in further support of his own interpretation, supposes that, before our Saviour's time, the good angels had provinces and dominions allotted them, one presiding over one country, and another over another country, which he apprehends is intimated by the mention that is made of the princes of *Persia* and *Greece*, and *Michael* the prince, Dan. x. 13, 20, 21. but that, at our Lord's resurrection, this power was taken from them, and they, being all divested of their dominion, were placed in subjection to him. But though it be undoubtedly true, that *Christ* is in our nature raised far above all *principalities and powers*, and that *angels, authorities, and powers* are made subject to him, (Ephes. i. 20, 21. and 1 Pet. ii. 21.); yet I know of no intimation in scripture, that he has reduced their powers, or taken away any thing from them, which they ever had before; nor does it seem very agreeable to the *glory* that shines forth in his headship to angels, as well as men, to suppose that he came to deprive, or divest them of any dignity, or dominion, that they before were possessed of: Nor is, what is said in Dan. x. 13, 20, 21. about the princes of *Persia* and *Greece*, and *Michael* the prince, any real proof of distinct dominions being assigned to different angels over different countries; for though *Michael*, which some suppose to be *Christ* himself, and others a chief minister of the heavenly host under him, appeared for *Israel* against their enemies,

of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

as the seed of the woman, that was to bruise the serpent's head, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) and God the Father, by him, exposed them to open contempt and shame, in the view of all the holy angels, as spoils of war, triumphing like a glorious conqueror over them, in virtue of his cross, (*ver. 14.*) as his sufferings upon it were a complete satisfaction to divine justice for sin, and as he *through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil*, (*Heb. ii. 14.*) and did this by his own strength, without the aid or assistance of any creature whatsoever. (*Isa. liiii. 3.*)

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days:

16 Since therefore the believing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, are complete in Christ, (*ver. 10.*) and the hand-writing of ordinances, that was contrary to both, is now cancelled. (See the note on *ver. 14.*) let no *Jewish* zealot pretend; (*μη τις υμεις κρινει*) or, if any of them should be so rash and presumptuous, let none of you be troubled at their vain pretences, to censure and condemn you, as tho' ye were excluded from salvation, because ye do not observe their legal rites: As, to instance in some particulars, which, together with circumcision, they lay great stress upon. None ought to judge and condemn you, for not abstaining from *Jewish* meats, or drinks, as forbidden in their law; or on account of your neglecting to keep their religious annual festivals, such as the passover, pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles; or their monthly feasts at the first appearance of the new moon; \* or even their seventh day weekly

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enemies; yet the princes of *Persia* and *Greece* may most naturally be understood of *carib* princes, that were set over their kingdoms, according to the common interpretation: And if *angels* were supposed to be intended by these princes, one can hardly think they were *good angels*, since one of them contended against the other, and none but *Michael* the prince hebl, with the angel that spake to *Daniel*. As to some further criticisms of this author's, to maintain his point, he supposes that there is no necessity of taking the words, *he made a shew of them openly*, in an ill sense; and we may with as good reason suppose, that there is no necessity of taking *triumphing over them*, to signify (as he renders it) *causing them to triumph*; for tho' it be so translated in *1 Cor. ii. 14.* yet the word itself, which is used only in these two places of the New Testament, most properly and frequently signifies to *triumph*; and so is to be construed one way, or the other, according as the subject matter leads to it, and not, without necessity, in the less usual sense. And in that parallel text, *Ephes. iv. 8.* where the

apostle speaks of Christ's *leading captivity captive*, the allusion is to the triumph of conquerors over their enemies; and in *Psal. lxviii. 17, 18.* the place there referred to, the holy angels are represented as his *attendants*, and not as the *vanquished captives*, in his triumphant ascension. (See also the notes on *Ephes. iv. 8.*)

\* *Sabbaths* seem to be here meant of the *seventh day sabbath*, because distinguished from the anniversary and monthly festivals of the *Jews*; and because this is the common import of the word *sabbath* in the New Testament, and is always so in the Old, when mentioned in conjunction with, or in contradiction to *new-moons* and *feasts*. (see Dr *Whitby's* note on the place.) But then the caution against a religious regard to it is to be considered only with reference to the obligations that lay on the *Jews* to observe that particular day, during the *Mosaic* dispensation, and its attending ritual observances, which did not belong to the morality of the sabbath, nor are obligatory upon *Christians* any more than the *seventh day*.



ly sabbaths, which God instituted to be peculiarly observed, by them under the *Mosaic* dispensation.

17 Which are  
2 shadow of  
things to come:  
but the body is of  
Christ.

17 Which sort of ordinances, so far forth as they were merely ceremonial and *Jewish*, were only types, figures, or adumbrations of the good things of the gospel, (*Heb. x. 1.*); but, in opposition to these shadows, the reality, truth, or substance of the things themselves, are brought in by Christ, and to be sought and found only in him. *The law, came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, (John i. 17.)*

18 Let no man  
be guileful of your  
reward, in a vol-  
untary humility,  
and

18 And since he, in whom ye are complete, is the head of all principality and power, (*ver. 10.* and see the note on *ver. 15.*) Let no one (*οὐδεις υμης κατασφαισεν*) whether

### N O T E.

self, under the gospel-state: But the devoting of a seventh part of time in a holy manner to the Lord, belongs unchangeably to the moral nature and obligation of the fourth commandment, which is transferred in the New Testament, from the seventh to the first day of the week. (See the notes on *John xx. 26.* and *Acts xx. 7.*) To this it may not be amiss to add the judicious note of Mr *Kennicott* in his dissertation on the obligations of *Coin* and *Abel*, p. 184, 185. where he says, "The sabbath, or weekly day of holiness, might well be called a *sign* to the Jews;" for the Jewish sabbath was a *sign*, as being founded on a double reason, the second of which (the Egyptian deliverance) evidently distinguished that people from all others, and was therefore as a sign constantly to remind them of the particular care of heaven, and what uncommon returns of goodness they were to make for so signal a deliverance. But there is great reason to believe, that the sabbath of the *Israelites* was altered with their year, at their coming forth from *Egypt*; and a short intimation to this point may not be here improper: The case then seems to be this: At the finishing of the creation God sanctified the seventh day; this seventh day, being the first day of *Adam's* life, was consecrated by way of first-fruits to God; and therefore *Adam* may reasonably be supposed to have began his computation of the days of the week with the first whole day of his own existence; thus the sabbath became the first day of the week: But when mankind fell from the worship of the true God, they first substituted the worship of the Sun in his place, and preserving the same weekly day of worship, but erecting it to the Sun, the sabbath was called Sunday; for that Sunday was the first day of the week, and is so still in the east, is proved by Mr *Seiden*, (*Jus. Nat. and Gent. lib. 3. c. 22.*) Thus the sabbath of the patriarchs continued to be the Sunday of the

idolators, till the coming up of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*; and then, as God altered the beginning of their year, so he also changed the day of their worship from Sunday to Saturday; the first reason of which might be, that as Sunday was the day of worship among the idolators, the *Israelites* would be more likely to join with them if they rested on the same day, than if they were to work on that day, and serve their God upon another. But a second reason certainly was, in order to perpetuate the memory of "their deliverance on that day from Egyptian slavery;" for *Moses*, when he applies the fourth commandment to the particular cases of his own people, *Deut. v. 15.* does not enforce it, as in *Exod. xx. 11.* by the consideration of God's resting on that day, which was the sabbath of the patriarchs; but binds it upon them by saying, "Remember that thou wast a servant in Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to keep this sabbath-day." Allowing then the preceding observations, we immediately see how the sabbath naturally reverted to Sunday, after the abolition of *Judaism*, without any express command for the alteration." To which he adds a quotation from Bp. *Cumtend*, (*Orig. Gen. Antio. 2. serm.*) which speaks of the *Gentiles*, as called, after Christ's time, into the same universal church with the patriarchs: and another from *Justin Martyr*, (*Apolog. prim. Edit. Thirlby, p. 98.*) which I find in the *Paris edition* of *Justin Martyr's 1d apology*, p. 99. The purport of which is, that all Christians generally assembled for religious worship on the Sunday, because it is the first day after that, in which God had finished the creation of the world; and on the same day of the week, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, rose from the dead (See also Dr *Owen* on the sabbath.)

and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffing up by his fleshly mind;

whether Jewish zealot or Gentile philosopher, take upon him † unjustly to deprive you of that glorious prize of the eternal inheritance which is adjudged in the gospel to every true believer; or lead you out of the way to it, by drawing you into a willing compliance with the false and affected humility of men's own devising, and not of God's commanding; and, under that disguise, into paying religious worship to angels, or inferior demons, as mediators and intercessors, on pretence of its being too bold and presumptuous to approach the Divine Majesty, without their interposition between him and you. The pretender to these notions arrogantly attempts to pry into such things as God has never revealed, and as are quite above his reach, and he has no knowledge of; and would determine about them under the power of his own vain and carnal mind, that is blown up and swelled with self-conceit, and the pride of human reasonings about God and angels, and the way of a sinner's access to him, and with a fond desire of being thought wiser than other men.

19 And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increased with the increase of God.

19 And such an one runs into these corrupt notions to the high dishonour of Jesus Christ, rejecting, instead of laying hold by faith on him, or adhering to, and trusting alone in him, as the only and all-sufficient Mediator and Advocate, to recommend us and our prayers to divine acceptance; and joining mere creatures in office with him, who is the head of rule and dominion over both the holy and the fallen angels, (ver. 10.) as well as over all the other works of his hand; and is the representative and vital, as well as governing head of the church; from whom all the members of his mystical body, deriving spiritual nourishment, are united to him and to one another, by his Spirit, and by faith and love, and by means of religious ordinances, which answer to the joints, ligaments and nerves, that unite the members of the natural body one to another, and to their head; and so increase in light and grace, comfort, holiness, and strength, and in every excellent and abounding improvement of a spiritual nature, which God is the author of, and which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, and to his praise and glory.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though

20 If therefore, according to the meaning and engagement of your baptism, (ver. 12.) ye be spiritually dead with Christ; and if by virtue of his death, who nailed the hand-writing of ordinances to his cross, (ver.

14.)

# N O T E.

† Here is a plain allusion to the *Brabeia*, judged the prize to wrestlers, racers, &c. in the Grecian games.

though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances;

22 (Touch not, taste not, handle not;

23 Which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

14.) ye be as effectually discharged, as though ye were corporally dead, from all obligations to pay any regard to *Jewish* institutions, which may be called the rudiments, or elements of the world, (*Gal. iv. 3.* see the paraphrase there,) Why then, as though ye were persons of a worldly temper, and living under such a carnal dispensation, are ye still burdened with legal ordinances, by those that would dogmatically impose them upon you? (*δογματισμοι*)

21 Such, for instance, as relate to the difference of meats, and consist in strict prohibitions to this effect, *viz.* Never venture to eat; no, nor taste; not so much as in the least touch any of those meats that are ceremonially unclean.

22 All which meats are nevertheless appointed of God, for the use of man under the gospel-state; and, are consumed and cast into the draught, in using them, and so cannot defile the soul, (*Mat. xi. 15, 17.*) And if, ye being now dead with Christ to the formerly divine ordinances about these things, (*ver. 20.*) they ought not to be enjoined, or observed, on the foot of human authority, how much less ought your consciences to be imposed upon in things that neither have, nor ever had any foundation in the word of God; but, like the worshipping of angels, &c. (*ver. 18.*) are merely human inventions enforced upon you by the arbitrary will and dictates of men?

23 These their commandments and doctrines are indeed added to those of the abolished *Mosaic* law, under the specious appearances of human wisdom, in contriving means of paying redundant honour to God, by superstitious worship and services, as free-will-offerings of our own, beyond all that he had prescribed or required; and in expressions of extraordinary humility, (*ver. 18.*); as also in mortifications of the body by un-instituted acts of self-denial, and not shewing any esteem of those things that might gratify and refresh animal nature: Whereas, in reality, all this pretended shew of wisdom, humility and mortification, has nothing worthy in itself, or truly honourable to God; but is only suited to cultivate and please the false taste of men of corrupt minds.

## R E C O L -

## N O T E.

\* Several critics have observed, that *touch not* (*αὐχρᾶν*) sometimes signifies *eat not*; and so the gradation of these *Jewish* prohibitions is very clear and strong, as *tasting* is less than *eating*, and *handling* is less than *tasting*.

and the next verse shews that they entirely relate "to meats that perish with the using." (See Bishop Davenant and Mr Peirce on the place.)

## R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How affectionate are Christ's servants to his people, whether they be personally acquainted with them or not ! And how solicitous for their union, comfort, and increase in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ ! How delighted in reflections on their faith and order ! And how concerned that, as they have received Christ in all his offices, they may walk in him, with steadfastness of faith, love, and obedience, and with gratitude and praise according to what they have learned and received from him ! And O how glorious is our Lord in his divine nature, as possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead, and in his human nature and office-capacity, as enriched with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for executing the high and important trust committed to him ! Believers cannot but be complete in him, whose divine and mediatorial characters are so great and excellent, who is the Head of dominion over all the holy and fallen angels, and the head of representation, government, and influence to the church ; all the members of which are closely united to him and one another, and derive all supplies of grace and spiritual nourishment from him, in such ways of union and communion as are answerable to those of the natural body. They are quickened by his Spirit from their former death in sin ; are forgiven all trespasses, and made conformable to his death and resurrection, according to the meaning and obligation of their baptism, which comes in the room of circumcision, and is to be applied to the same sort of subjects ; and they are delivered from all obligations of the ceremonial and moral law too, as a covenant of works, and from its curse, which, for failure of obedience to its precepts, stood against them. But, blessed be God, the whole frame of legal ordinances, that one way or other testified against them, is now demolished by the cross of Christ, who is the substance of its shadows, as they are fulfilled in him ; and has taken away its curse, as bore by him ; and who, by means of his own death, has entirely subdued, disarmed, and publicly triumphed over all the devils in hell, as his captives in chains. What therefore have believers to do any more with Jewish abolished meats and drinks, or their solemn feasts and seventh-day sabbath, or their ceremonial rights of any kind ? How much less ought they to fall in with human inventions and injunctions, relating to the worship of God ! How careful should they be, never to pay religious homage to him by the mediation of saints or angels, to the disparagement and rejection of Christ, as their only Head and Advocate, or in any way that he has not prescribed in his word ! They are dead with him to all these things ; and whatever pretences there may be of wisdom, humility, and mortification of the body in them, Let none deceive us by enticing words, nor condemn us for neglecting them ; nor lead us out of the way to eternal life, by drawing us into an observation of them. They are all with-worship, of men's own devising, to soothe the pride and carnal temper of those that would be wiser above what is written, and pry into things that they know nothing of. They are works of supererogation and superstition, that bring no honour to God, whatsoever is pretended by men. May we therefore keep fast hold by faith on Christ, and steadfastly adhere to him, as our Head, and abide by his institutions, and never submit our consciences to the ordinances, doctrines, and commandments of men !

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle exhorts the Colossians to be heavenly-minded, as those that are risen with Christ, 1,—4. ; to mortify all corrupt affections, as those that are renewed after the image of God, 5,—11. ; to cultivate mutual love, forbearance, and forgiveness, with other evangelical graces, 12,—17. ; and to practise the relative duties of wives and husbands, children, parents, and servants, 18,—25.*

## TEXT.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

## PARAPHRASE.

**I**F, as I trust, according to your profession, ye be indeed risen from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, through the faith of the operation of God, (*chap. ii. 12.*) together with, in conformity to, and by the quickening virtue of a risen Saviour, shew that ye are so, by the elevated temper, and outgoings of your hearts, as aspiring upwards in your meditations and views, inquiries and earnest pursuits, by prayer, and all other ordinances of divine appointment, after realizing, clear and enlarged experiences and assurances of the durable, substantial, and satisfying things, that relate to a future world of all delights, that lyes far above all visible heavens, (*Ephes. iv. 10.*) where Jesus, your ascended Head in human nature is; and because he is there exalted in all his majesty and authority, dignity and glory, blessedness, rest and safety, as these are metaphorically signified by his sitting at the right hand of God the Father, (see the note on *Acts vii. 55.*) to secure your best and eternal interests, by making continual intercession, and preparing a place for you, that *where he is there ye may be also, to behold his glory.* (*John xiv. 3. and xvii. 24.*)

2 Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

2 Let all your affections of desire and hope, love and delight, be supremely fixed, like spiritually minded men, (*Rom. viii. 5.*) with relish and savour, (*σπουδή*) upon those excellent things, that belong to, and are transacted in that upper state, which far surpass all our thoughts; and not upon the empty, uncertain, perishing and defiling pleasures and enjoyments of this world; nor upon the ceremonial rudiments of it, which are as much below the worth and dignity of these sublime felicities, as the earth is inferior to heaven: And 'tis highly fit that ye, as Christians, should seek after, and set your affections on heavenly things.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

3 For ye are, by profession and obligation, and all true believers among you are, by communion with Christ in his death, really dead in your hearts and affections, as to the *Mosaic* law, and crucified, with him, to sin and the world, (*Rom. vi. 2, 6. and Gal. vi. 14.*) so as not to seek your portion, and place your happiness in earthly things: And all the entertainments and enjoyments of your spiritual life are maintained, and carried on, in secret transactions between God and your own souls here, till they shall be perfected in an eternal life of all blessedness and glory hereafter, by virtue of your mystical union with Christ your head, who himself is essentially united with God the Father, as he

is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, (*John* xiv. 11. and xvii. 21.; see the notes there.) The things of this heavenly life are out of sight, they being hid, as much as Christ himself now is, from an eye of sense, and from the conceptions of a carnal mind; and after all that believers themselves experience of them, they *know not what they shall be*, (*1 John* iii. 2.); and they are the most excellent things, that are securely treasured up with Christ, in the secret purposes, and in the immediate presence of God the Father, as a safe and precious reserve for you, *ready to be revealed in the last times*. (*1 Pet.* i. 4, 5.)

4 When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

4 When Christ, who lives in us, (*Gal.* ii. 20.) and is the purchaser, author, sustainer and finisher, and the scope and end of our spiritual life, shall appear, as the Judge of the whole world, in his own glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of all the holy angels, (*Luke* ix. 26.); then ye also, who are quickened by his Spirit, shall be glorified with him; and shine forth, in soul and body, with a glory resembling that in which he himself will be manifested as your Head and Saviour. (*Phil.* iii. 21.)

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

5 In prospect therefore of this blessed day, and in reflection on the spirituality, purity and sublime happiness ye shall then enjoy, as those that are risen with Christ, and dead to sin and the pleasures of this world, labour, *through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body*, (*Rom.* viii. 13.) that ye may daily subdue them more and more, (*ἐκπορεύεσθαι*) till ye have entirely slain all the remainders of your carnal inclinations to iniquitous and earthly things; which may be considered as so many members of the old man, the body of sin, that execute its designs about earthly things, and are influenced, and exert themselves, by the members of the natural body, (see the note on *Rom.* vi. 13.) while ye continue in this imperfect state upon earth. To instance in some particulars, that are a shame to the Christian character, exert your holy principles, under divine influence, to gain an absolute conquest over all sorts of unlawful embraces, whether in the single or married life, (see the note on *1 Chr.* v. 1.) all impurity in thought, word, or deed; all propensions to any sin, and particularly that of unchastity; all the first motions to it in heart; and all excessive desire after the enjoyments of this world, which is spiritual idolatry, as it sets the creature in the place of, or at least in a competition with God himself, and draws the heart, and its trust and confidence, off from him to them.

6 For which things like the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

6 All these, and every thing of a like sinful nature, are to be abandoned and abhorred, as defiling and provoking evils, on account of, and for the punishment of which, the justice of God breaks forth in executions of his terrible indignation, sometimes in this world, and certainly in the next, on the refractory sons (*απειθήναι*) of infidelity, and disobedience to his commands.

7 In which sinful courses ye yourselves formerly went on, with indulgence and choice, in the days of your unbelief and unregeneracy; when, while dead toward God, ye lived in the love and practice of them, committing all iniquity with greediness.

8 But now ye, as Christians renewed by grace, ought to have no further fellowship with these deeds of darkness; *the time past of your life should suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*, (1 Pet. iv. 3.) and together with these fleshly corruptions, ye ought to discard and utterly renounce all the following sins, that most immediately deprave the soul; such as causeless and intemperate anger; and furious passion, which is the height of anger; and a malicious revengeful spirit, which is worst of all: ye ought also to avoid all manner of language that discovers a bad disposition of heart; such as speaking reproachfully of God and sacred things, and speaking evil of others, (Eph. iv. 31.) to blast their name, reputation, and usefulness, or to be any way injurious to them; and ye should abstain from all immodest expressions, which tend to defile your own, or others minds, that nothing of this kind may ever proceed out of your lips.

9 Take heed also of ever speaking any thing contrary to truth, with a design of deceiving one another, which would be to imitate and act under the influence of the father of lies, (John viii. 44.) and is inconsistent with your holy character, privileges and obligations; since, according to your profession, ye, as I trust, have sincerely and absolutely cast off, and renounced the body of sin, with all its pernicious and defiling practices, which may be considered as the *old man*, that is as ancient as your beings, and works with subtilty in you; but which is now in a decaying state, and will soon expire, like a man of decrepid old age, that is daily declining in his strength, and hastening to the grave: (see the paraphrase on Rom. vi. 6. and Eph. iv. 22.) It is a shameful, self-contradictory thing for you, who, as members of Christ, *have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts*, (Gal. v. 24.) to give way to any of these abominations,

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

10 And 'tis much more so, as by a work of heart-changing grace ye have assumed, and as it were clothed yourselves with, the holy qualities, and beautiful ornaments of the new creature; which is a restoration to the divine likeness, and consists of spiritual light and knowledge, in the renewing of your minds, as well as of righteousness and true holiness, in the renewing of your hearts and lives, (*Eph. iv. 23, 24.*) according to the pure and spotless image of God, or of Christ, who at first created man after his own likeness, which was defaced by the fall; but in which he anew creates him, by supernatural grace, as *God's workmanship in Christ Jesus*, (*Eph. ii. 10.*) and in conformity to him, (*Rom. viii. 29.*)

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

11 In which new creation, and the benefits of it, there is no partial respect to persons, on account of any external privileges, or the want of them; not to the *Gentiles*, the most polite of which are the *Greeks*; nor to the *Jews*; no, nor to the most learned among them; not to them that have been circumcised in the flesh, and glory in it; nor to them, whom they disdain for their being uncircumcised; nor to the more rude and barbarous nations among the *Gentiles*; no, not to the most savage of them all, like those that dwell in the uncultivated region of *Scythia*†; nor to masters or servants, free-men or slaves: but as to persons of all these external characters, without regarding or disregarding them, for the sake of any such distinctions, Christ is their all who believe in him; he is all in the whole of their salvation; and they are *complete in him*, (*chap. ii. 10.*) he is all in all their hopes and confidences, esteem and comforts; in all their privileges and enjoyments; and in all their acceptance with God, preservation and security for eternal life; and he is all in the effectual workings of his Spirit in them all: so that nothing is to be regarded by any of them, in point of saving advantage, but Christ; and nothing will stand them in stead, but an interest in him, *who of God is made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that no flesh might glory in his presence, but he that glorieth, might glory in the Lord*, (*1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31.*)

12 In

#### N O T E.

† *Scythia* was a vast country, that lay with great extent both in *Asia* and *Europe*, and was divided into several parts in the *Asiatic* and *European* districts; and the *Scythians* were an exceeding brutish, savage sort of people, a large account of whom, and of *Scythia*, may be seen under this word, in *Ceslar's* great historical dictionary: And as

the *Greeks* were the most learned and polite, and the *Scythians* the most barbarous of the *Gentiles*, the paraphrase has taken in a view of the different ranks of all nations among the *Gentiles*, as well as of the general distinction of them from the *Jews*, and the different ranks of people among both.



11 Put on therefore (as the elect of God holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

12 In an entire dependence therefore on Christ, as those whom God hath chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that ye should be holy, and without blame before him in love, (Eph. i. 4.) whom he hath accordingly formed unto holiness, and regards as the objects of his special love; let it be your great concern and endeavour, that, instead of the works of the flesh, which ye are to put off, (ver. 8.) ye may assume the practice of, and as it were clothe yourselves with the tenderest compassion toward the miserable and distressed, in imitation of your heavenly Father, who is eminently merciful, (Luke vi. 31.) with a generous, friendly and benevolent temper and behaviour towards one another, and towards all men, (Gal. vi. 10.) with modest thoughts of yourselves, and condescension to persons of low degree; with gentleness, mildness, and candour, towards all ye have to do with, as learning of our great Lord, who was meek and lowly in heart, (Mat. xi. 29.) and with persevering patience under repeated and long-continued provocations, in consideration of God's long-suffering toward you.

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

13 Let all this be attended with a bearing and forbearing spirit one towards another, (Eph. iv. 2.) under various infirmities; and with a mutually forgiving temper in case of offences: so that if there be any one, that thinks himself to be injured by, or to have matter of complaint against, one or another of his brethren; as ye hope and profess, that Christ, in the greatness of his love, and at the expence of his own blood, hath freely and fully pardoned all your trespasses, which are infinitely greater than any that can be committed against you: even so, in imitation of, and influenced by the riches of his grace, and in obedience unto his awful injunctions, (Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15.) be ye ready to forgive one another those comparatively small offences that any may have given you.

14 And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

14 And let it be your principal care to put on brotherly Christian love, like an upper-garment\*, to spread over, and add a beauteous lustre to all these graces; even that love, which, in its principle, tendency, and design, is the fulfilling of the law, (Rom. xiii. 10.) and is the noblest bond of union and peace, (Eph. iv. 3.) to keep every other grace in its regular exercise, and to knit all the members of Christ together in most perfect harmony, till the whole mystical body shall grow up in

N O T E.

\* And above all things (ver. 14) is charity may as well be render'd, over all these, meaning the virtues or graces before-mention'd;

and both senses are attended to in the paraphrase.

in all things to its perfect stature in him, (*Eph. iv. 11,—15.*)

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.

15 And for the better cultivating this brotherly love, see to it, that a sense of your being in a state of friendship with God, through Jesus Christ, which is a *peace that passeth all understanding*, (*Phil. iv. 7.*) engage you to the love and practice of that excellent peace and concord among yourselves, which God is the author and approver of, and enjoins ‡. Let this peace, in both these views, enthroned itself, and have the governing sway in your hearts; (*“”*) into which happy state of peace with God, and one another, ye are called by the grace of the gospel, as all of you together, whether *Jews or Gentiles*, are *one body of Christ*, and *members in particular*, (*1 Cor. xii. 27.*) and, in reflection on this, let all the powers of your souls unite in gratitude and praise to the God of such a wonderful mercy.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

16 In order to your being established in an abiding sense of this peace with God, and in this harmony with your Christian brethren, and indeed in every grace before-mentioned; let the whole word of God, which Christ is the author of, as it was indited by his Spirit, (*1 Pet. i. 11.*) and particularly let the gospel, of which he is not only the author, but also the main subject, (*Rom. i. 3.*) have a permanent and predominant residence, not in your heads only, but in your hearts, with all the riches of spiritual knowledge and understanding, that are to be derived from it, for making a wise and proper use of its various parts on all occasions, to the glory of God, your direction in the way of duty, and edification unto complete salvation; and for living abundantly under the power of it: and be ye mutually helpful in instructing and exciting one another to bless and praise the Lord, as by all other means in public or private; so particularly in the ordinance of *singing with the voice together*, (*Isa. lii. 8.*) and thereby celebrating the honours of his name in sacred poetry; some compositions of which may be styled *psalms*, others *hymns*, and others *spiritual songs*; which God has provided for the use of his church in his word, and in

#### N O T E.

‡ As the *peace of God* is said to *pass all understanding*, in *Phil. iv. 7.* which was wrote about the same time with this epistle, and is the only place besides, where this phrase, *the peace of God*, is used, we are led to understand it here, as well as there, of the peace that believers have *with God*: But as *peace* *ye with another* seems most agreeable to the

general scope of this context, I think it ought not to be excluded; and as a *sense of peace* with God is the best foundation of, and has the most powerful influence to promote, *peace* among fellow-Christians, I see no impropriety in supposing, that the apostle might comprehend them both.

is occasional productions of inspired prophets, under an immediate afflatus of the Spirit, (see the note on *Eph.* v. 19.) and which ever of these ye may join in, it ought to be, not only with a graceful harmonious voice, but with spiritual affections, and an exercise of suitable graces in your hearts towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and God in him, which is the best of all melody; the sweetest to your own souls, and most acceptable to him.

17 And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

17 And in all cases, as well as these, whatsoever ye engage in, whether in discourse or behaviour, in public or private, relating to the civil or religious life, let it be with a conscientious regard to the authority and command of the Lord Jesus Christ, with an humble dependence on him for all direction, assistance and acceptance, and with an eye to his, together with his Father's glory; and let it be attended with thanksgivings *always for all things*, (*Eph.* v. 20.) to God, even his Father and your Father in him, as the great Mediator, on whose account all blessings come to you; and therefore through whom all thank-offerings for what ye have received, as well as all prayers for what ye need, are to be presented to God, that they may be well pleasing in his sight, (*Heb.* xiii. 15, 16. and *1 Pet.* ii. 5.) These are duties that belong to you all in common; but there are others, that are peculiar to your different civil stations.

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

18 As Christian religion does not dissolve, but strengthens moral obligations to *relative* duties, which the law of nature requires, whether it be toward believers or unbelievers, or toward *Jewish* or *Gentile* converts, that may have different sentiments as to some religious principles and practices: so believing women among you, that are in a married state, ought to behave in a meek and submissive manner toward their own lawful husbands, as far as they can do it with a safe conscience, and as is consistent with their superior relation to the Lord Jesus, and becoming their Christian character. (See the note on *Eph.* v. 21.)

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

19 On the other hand, those of you that bear the relation of husbands, ought to treat your wives with all tenderness, kindness, and affection; to delight in their company, and do all that in you lies for their temporal and spiritual ease, comfort, and happiness; and not to exercise a severe and arbitrary lordship over them, or break out into furious and passionate expressions against them, or use them ill by words or blows, or go about to lay any hardships upon them that would be grievous to them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

20 Let those of you, who are sons or daughters, remember that your natural obligations remain in full force to your parents, whether fathers or mothers, *Jews or Gentiles*, Christians or heathens; and ye ought accordingly to make conscience of paying all filial duty to them, in obedience to their just and reasonable commands in every thing that is lawful for parents to enjoin, and for children to do\*: for this is agreeable to the will of Christ, and acceptable to God through him.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

21 On the other side, it ought to be the conscientious and tender care of those of you that are parents, whether fathers or mothers, (see the note on *Eph. vi. 4.*) that ye study the tempers of your children, and endeavour to establish your authority over them, and allure them to their duty, by prudent, kind, and gentle methods, and never sour their minds by furious or opprobrious language, nor by unreasonable impositions, nor unmerciful corrections, to irritate their angry passions: take heed of all such harsh treatment, (*ita ut adu-er-*) that their spirits may not be broke, and they disheartened, and filled with prejudice both against yourselves and against the gospel, which ye profess, but are far from recommending by such an ill temper and behaviour toward them.

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the Lord; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

22 As to those of you that are servants, or even bondslaves, whether to Christians or heathens, that are your lawful masters in things pertaining to the body and temporal affairs, ye ought to be very diligent and faithful in executing the trusts, and doing the business they commit to you, and in making their interest your own, and fulfilling all their commands, as far as they do not interfere with your duty toward your higher Master in heaven, relating to the concerns of religion, and of your own souls, (see the note on *ver. 20.*); and ye ought cheerfully to attend to their service, not merely while ye are under their eye, as persons that seek only to approve yourselves to men, and gain their favour; but in the sincerity of your hearts at all times,

as

#### NOTES.

\* In all things must be understood here, with regard to *children*, and *ver. 22.* with regard to *servants*, under a limitation to *all lawful things*: For it could not be the duty of Christian children, or servants, to obey their heathen parents, or masters, were they to command them to renounce their faith in Christ, and profession of his name, and to worship idols, or commit any other iniquity; nor could it be the duty of those that were led into the liberty of the gospel, to obey

their parents, or masters, in case they should command them to observe the rites and ceremonies of the *Mosaic law*: And therefore as *wives* are to submit themselves to their husbands, only so far as is *fit in the Lord*, (*ver. 18.*) so *servants* are to obey their masters according to the flesh, (*ver. 22.*) only in things that relate to the body and civil concerns, or that their own consciences approve of in religion.

as in the sight and presence of the all-seeing God, and as persons that act from a principle of conscience towards him, and are most of all concerned to be approved of him in all your ways, and to do nothing that is offensive to him, whether any one else be present to observe you or not.

22 And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men :

23 And whatever service ye are called to engage in, it ought to be, not merely by constraint, much less with grudging or reluctance ; but with a willing and ready mind, from a sense of duty toward the Lord Jesus, in obedience to his commands, and for his honour and glory, as ye are professors of his name ; and not from a selfish mercenary spirit, that aims at only pleasing men.

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance : for ye serve the Lord Christ.

24 To excite and encourage you to all cheerfulness and fidelity herein, ye ought to be firmly persuaded, and seriously to consider, that whatsoever ill treatment and unrighteous returns ye may meet with, instead of a suitable reward from your masters on earth, ye shall receive a gracious reward of the heavenly inheritance from the Lord, the great Judge of all, at the last day ; and so ye (though servants) shall be dealt with as sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ : for in doing your duty to earthly masters, ye really pay honour and service to the Lord Jesus himself, who is the best of all masters, whose providence has placed you in that state of servitude, and whose word requires a becoming behaviour answerable to it, that ye may adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, (Tit. ii. 10.)

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done : and there is no respect of persons.

25 But he that is guilty of any injustice, whether as a servant, in neglecting his master's business, or purloining his goods ; or, as a master, in rendering evil for good, or with-holding what is due to his servant, shall receive a just and impartial recompence of reward for all his iniquitous doings, (Heb. ii. 2.) for in the judgment of the great day, our blessed Lord will not be biassed by any external circumstances, nor make any difference between masters and servants, bond or free, in favour of one, or in prejudice to the other, on account of the different relations they bear one to another in this world ; but he will pass a righteous sentence upon all, according to the evidence that shall arise for or against them, from their moral and religious characters, whatsoever their civil station has been upon earth. (See the note on Eph. vi. 8.)

## R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

With what elevation of soul should they, that are risen with Christ, follow their ascended Saviour from earth to his exalted state in heaven, where he lives for them, and is the source and security of spiritual life to them, and will at length give them an illustrious appearance with himself, in all possible glory! He has already made a happy change upon them, who were once disobedient, and lived and walked in such a sinful course, as exposed them to divine wrath; but, by the efficacy of regenerating grace, they have now discarded the whole body of sin, with all its members; and have assumed a new form in knowledge and righteousness according to the holy image of God, in which he at first created man. O blessed dispensation of gospel-grace, in which believing Jews and Gentiles, and people of all ranks in outward privileges and worldly circumstances, are one body, and equally partakers of all spiritual blessings in Christ, who is all in the whole of their salvation that are the chosen and beloved of God! How powerful and engaging are their obligations to mortify every sinful propensity of body and mind; to lay aside all wrathful dispositions of heart, and all blasphemous, unseemly, false, and deceitful expressions of the lips; to be clothed with the tenderest compassion and humility, patience and forbearance one towards another; and to be of a forgiving spirit to those that have offended them, in imitation of, and as influenced by, the infinitely greater forgiveness that Christ has extended to themselves! And O with what beauty, harmony, and union, would Christians shine, were they to cultivate mutual love, and study the things that make for peace, under a governing sense of God's being reconciled to them; and were their hearts enlarged in gratitude and praise, and enriched with all spiritual wisdom, and every grace, for their own and others edification, in singing the honours of Christ's name, and in adorning their holy profession, by doing every thing, in word and deed, with a dependence on him, and in obedience to his authority over them! This is the best way of shewing forth their thankfulness to God the Father, thro' Jesus Christ, for all the benefits he has bestowed upon them. And as ever they would acquit themselves with honour to their holy profession, they should make conscience of fulfilling the natural and civil duties of their various relations in the present life. Wives should behave with due subjection to their husbands in all things that are fit and proper for them, as members of Christ: And husbands should be affectionately tender toward their wives, and labour against every thing that might make them uncomfortable. Children ought readily to obey their parents in all their lawful commands, as ever they would fulfil their duty toward them according to the will of God: And parents should take heed of discouraging their children by any severe treatment of them. Servants, considering themselves as continually under God's eye, should always attend to their master's business, with as much cheerfulness and fidelity in their absence, as in their presence; and should do every thing from a principle of religion, as being desirous of pleasing God, rather than men; and as being assured, that, in doing the duty of their stations, they serve the Lord Christ, and that he will graciously honour them with the reward of an eternal inheritance. And O what an awful check would it be upon all iniquity, were we to consider, that the righteous Judge of all, who has no respect to any one's outward condition in this world, will most certainly render vengeance to them that practise unrighteous dealings with others!

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle exhorts masters to do their duty toward servants. 1. Recommends to persons of all ranks the general duties of perseverance in prayer, and Christian prudence in behaviour and speech, 2,—6. Refers them to Tychicus and Onesimus, for an account of the state of his affairs, 7,—9. Sends salutations from several by name, together with*

with his own; and, adding a charge to Archippus, concludes with his usual benediction, 10,—18.

## TEXT.

**M**asters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**S Christian servants ought to be obedient to their masters in all lawful things, (*chap. iii. 24. †*) so those of you that stand in the relation of masters ought not to think yourselves lawless, or at liberty to treat any of your servants in an arbitrary tyrannical way; no, not even such as may be slaves and heathens; but ye should deal justly and equitably with them, in taking good care of them, not withholding their wages, or any proper provisions, according to their wants, and your contracts with them, (*Jam. v. 4.*); nor ought ye to lay any more burdens, or harder services upon them, than they are well able to bear; nor to be severe in your threatnings and punishments, beyond their deserts; nor backward to give suitable encouragements to fidelity in your service; as seriously considering that ye yourselves, as well as they, are under the command of, and accountable to your great Lord and Master in heaven, who continually observes you, and is infinitely more above you, than any of you can be above the meanest of them; and will deal with you in the great day according to your dealings with them. (*Chap. iii. 25.*)

3 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving:

2 To proceed to the duties that are incumbent, not only on masters, but upon you all; whatsoever be your relations in life \*, ye ought to be constant, at set seasons, in daily prayer to the God of all grace, in the name of Christ, and by the assistance of his Spirit, for personal and relative, public and private, temporal and spiritual blessings, whether in the closet, family, or religious assemblies, as there may be opportunity; and to watch for all special calls of providence, and needful assistances from above, that ye may be continually ready to engage in this duty, and persevere in it, though ye may not immediately see the answers of your prayers: Ye should also watch against all hindrances, that would interfere

## NOTES.

† As this verse concludes the exhortations to relative duties, it might have been much better joined to the third, than made the beginning of the fourth chapter. And then the last verse of the third chapter would the more easily be consider'd as referring to masters, as well as servants.

\* If continue in prayer be consider'd in connection with the preceding verse, which speaks of "masters giving to their servants that which is just and equal," it intimates that one part of the duty of Christian masters

is to pray daily with, and for their servants, and to be concern'd for, and do what in them lies to take care of their souls, as well as bodies, and to bring them into a compliance with a holy resolution, like that of Joshua, (*chap. xxiv. 25.*) "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." However, this and the following exhortations, certainly include masters, and all other professing Christians, whatever their civil stations be in the world.

interfere with this duty, and against all deadness in your own spirits, that there may be no indifference, trifling, or wanderings in performing it: And always take care that, with supplications for the mercies ye need, grateful praises and cheerful thanksgivings to God be joined for what he has favoured you with relating to this world, and that which is to come, (*Phil.* iv. 6.)

3 Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

3 And in all your addresses to the throne of grace, I earnestly beseech you to be in a special manner mindful of me and *Timothy*, (*chap.* i. 1.) and other brethren that labour with us in the word and doctrine; praying that God would give us opportunity, and enable us, with liberty of spirit and expression, and with faith and boldness, to lay open the deep things of God, and *preach the unfearchable riches of Christ among the Gentiles*, (*Ephes.* iii. 8.) for the doing of which I am, even now, a prisoner in bonds.

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

4 I beg your prayers particularly for me in my present confined and afflicted circumstances, that, as far as providence shall favour me with opportunities for it, I may be eminently assisted in setting forth the Redeemer's glory, and the whole counsel of God, in such a free, extensive, plain, and open manner, and with such a frame of spirit as becomes me, and as the duty of my office and importance of the subject call for.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

5 As to your own behaviour in the world, see that the whole of your conversation be managed with all circumspection and Christian prudence, towards unbelievers and all that are without the pale of the visible church, that ye may not be defiled by them; but may be useful and exemplary to them, and win upon them, and never give them any occasion to think, or speak evil of the doctrines and ways of the Lord: And, in this manner, labour to improve every opportunity of filling up the duties of your respective stations; of doing good to your very enemies, and of preventing such offences, as might provoke them to raise persecutions against you, and thereby shorten your days, or cut you off from further services to Christ and his cause. (*See Ephes.* v. 5. 16.)

6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

6 With the like important views, take heed that your discourse on all occasions be as becomes persons whose hearts are seasoned with grace, and whose language tends to recommend the grace of God, and promote a gracious spirit in others; and so is preserved from corruption, (as meat is kept wholesome, and free from putrefaction, by the salt that cures and seasons it,



and makes it savoury) that ye may know how to give a good account of the reason of the hope that is in you, with modesty, meekness and wisdom, (1 Pet. iii. 15.) and how to answer scrupulous doubts, and serious inquiries on one hand, and perverse cavillings and captious objections, on the other, with respect to points of Christian faith, duty, and experience, to every one that would propose any proper question to you about them.

7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord :

7 As to what concerns myself, and the situation of my affairs, both with respect to outward circumstances, and inward supports and refreshments, which I know ye would be glad to hear of, I have ordered *Tychicus*, who brings this epistle, to relate them to you at large, by word of mouth : and ye may depend upon the account he will give you of them ; he being a dearly beloved brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and a conscientious, faithful minister of Christ, and diligent fellow-labourer with me in the work of the Lord.

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts :

8 And being as desirous to know how matters stand with you as ye can be to hear how it fares with me, I have sent him with a special design, that he may get a thorough insight into the state of your religious concerns, in order to his reporting it to me ; and that he may administer relief and comfort to you, under all your trials, both by good counsel, and by acquainting you with the remarkable appearances of God's standing by me, and with the success of my preaching the gospel, even in my bonds.

9 With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

9 For which purpose, I have also joined with him *Onesimus*, who whatsoever he formerly were, is now, through the wonderful power of divine grace, become a sincere and dearly beloved brother in Christ \* ; and who, being one of our own city, and now a real convert, may be the more welcome and acceptable to you. These two faithful brethren will give you a just and particular account of every thing that passes here at Rome, and in this neighbourhood, relating to my sufferings, and supports, and behaviour under them, and to what God is still doing by and for me.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and

10 *Aristarchus* the Macedonian, who was exposed to great danger for my sake, (*Acts* xix. 29.) and is now a pri-

\* *Onesimus* was that runaway that had e-  
lop'd from his master *Philemon*, and purloin'd  
his goods ; but, straying to Rome, was converted  
by the apostle *Paul* there. (See for an  
account of him in the epistle to *Philemon*.

N O T E.  
(with the paraphrase and notes upon it.) He  
was of the city of *Colosse*, and some think  
he, by this time, was a member of that  
church ; and others, that he was employed  
in the work of the ministry.

and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you receive him,)

a prisoner with me at *Rome*, desires to be affectionately remembered to you all, (see the note on *Rom.* xvi. 3.) as doth *John Mark*, nephew to *Barnabas*, my old friend and colleague in apostolic labours, (*Acts* xiii. 2, 3, 4, &c.) and if this his near kinsman should come to *Colosse*, † I desire that ye would receive him in the most friendly manner, and treat him with all Christian respect and kindness, according to the recommendations ye have already had, and are now given of him, as worthy of it.

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

11 Another of my fellow-labourers also, who goes by two names, one of which in *Greek* is *Jesus*, which answers to that of *Josbua* in *Hebrew*, and the other in *Latin* is *Justus*, signifying *Just*. This upright man joins with the other two in Christian salutations. All these, tho' *Jewish* converts, bear the sincerest respect to you, without the least prejudice against any of you, on account of your being *Gentile*-believers; ‡ and they are the only ministers of that denomination, that are with me, and have joined their labours with mine, during my confinement, in helping forward the work of the Lord, by preaching the same gospel with myself, unto the propagation and enlargement of the kingdom of grace, which God has set up under the gospel-dispensation, in this world, in order to its being perfected in all its felicities and glories, in the world to come. These have been of great use and comfort to me by this means, as well as by their agreeable company, and various assistances and reliefs under all my sufferings for Christ.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ saluteth you, always labouring sorely for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

12 To these I must add some others of the *Gentile* sort, to whom ye are very dear; as particularly *Epaphras*, who is not only a *Gentile* convert, but one of your own city, much devoted to your service, and a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, (see the note on *Phil.* ii. 25.) sends his sincere respects to you; and shews how much he has you upon his heart, by his constantly remembering you at the throne of grace, and labouring with great earnestness and servour, as it were to an agony, (*αγωνιζόμενος*) in his wrestlings with God in prayer for you, that ye may continue stedfast in the faith,

#### NOTES.

† *Mark* had before this time regain'd an interest in the apostle's affection and confidence, notwithstanding the great displeasure he formerly had against him, for leaving him and *Barnabas* at *Pamphilia*, (*Acts* xv. 38, 39.) which shews the excellence of the apostle's forgiving spirit. This *Mark* is supposed to have been the writer of the gospel that bears his name.

‡ The apostle *Peter* is not mentioned with those of the circumcision, that sent their salutations and are said to be the only fellow-workers of the *Jewish* sort, and a comfort to the apostle *Paul*. 'Tis therefore certain that either *Peter* was not then at *Rome*, or that he acted very unworthy of his character.

as complete Christians, that are fully instructed in the doctrines and duties of the gospel, and eminent in your conformity to them, like perfect men in Christ; being (*κεκληρωμένοι*) filled with his light and grace, according to the utmost extent of that revelation which God has made of his mind and will, and in such a manner as may be every way acceptable to him.

13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

13 For I must needs bear witness to this excellent laborious brother, from what I have observed of him, and heard from his own mouth, that he is zealously solicitous for your present and eternal happiness; and has a like warm and tender concern for the prosperity of your two neighbouring churches\*, one of which is seated at Laodicea, and the other at Hierapolis, a large and populous city of Phrygia.

14 Luke the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

14 The Evangelist Luke, who was brought up for a physician, but is now a dear brother in the Lord, devoting himself entirely to his service, for healing the spiritual distempers of perishing souls; and Demas, another ministering servant, join in sending their Christian respects, (see the note on 2 Tim. iv. 10.)

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

15 Let my own hearty love be presented to those brethren in Christ that belong to the church at Laodicea, and in a very particular manner, to the well-known Nymphas † and his Christian-family, which for its regularity, purity, religious worship and order, under his conduct, is like a New Testament-church.

16 And when this epistle is read amongst you, canie that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans: and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

16 And it is my express order that, after this epistle shall have been distinctly read through, according to my design, in a public manner among you, the church at Colosse, ye take care that, either it, or an exact copy of it, be sent to, and also read in the church that usually meets for the worship of God at Laodicea ‡; and that a certain Laodicean-letter be likewise communicated to, and publicly read among you.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the

17 All that I have further to add for your direction is, that, as ye are surrounded with subtil adversaries, who seek to pervert you, (*chap. ii. 8.*) ye would, in a prudent, friendly, and respectful manner, admonish Archippus, a ministering servant

#### NOTES.

\* It is probable that Epaphras had been remarkably instrumental in forming, or building up these churches; and therefore had a peculiar affection to, and concern for them.

† We know no more of Nymphas than what is here said of him; but he seems to have been a noted man of eminent piety, and strict religion in the orders of his Christian family. (See the note on Rom. xvi. 5.)

‡ Various have been the conjectures about this epistle, which is lost, unless it were that,

which some very improbably have supposed, the apostle wrote from Laodicea to the Ephesians: It rather seems not to have been any epistle wrote by him, but wrote to him from Laodicea, relating to the state of affairs there, and in the neighbouring churches, which, perhaps might give occasion to, and cast some light upon this epistle to the Colossians; and therefore might be proper to be read in the church at Colosse, which, doubtless, knew what epistle is here referred to.

the Lord, that  
thou fulfil it.

servant among you, (see the note on *Philem.* ver. 2.) and remind him of the great need there is of his utmost vigilance, saying, We intreat you, dear Sir, always to bear upon your heart the excellent nature, design, and importance of, and to lay yourself out, in the name and strength of Christ, with all wisdom, diligence, and faithfulness, in discharging that sacred office which you have been honoured with, by the favour and authority of the Lord Jesus, and for his glory, that you may explain, confirm, vindicate, and enforce the great doctrines of divine revelation, and exemplify them in your own spirit and conduct; may reprove sin, and confute error; may carefully fill up the duties of your trust in their whole extent; and persevere therein all your days, to the comfort of your own and other souls; and may do all that in you lyes for the furtherance of the gospel, in the conversion of sinners, and edification of the saints.

18 The salu-  
tion by the  
hand of me Paul.  
Remember my  
bonds. Grace be  
with you. Amen.

18 To conclude after my usual manner in all my epistles to the churches, (see the note on *Rom.* xvi. 22.) I subjoin my best wishes to you all in my own handwriting: and to give this, together with all that has been said in the above letter, the greater weight with you, as also to engage your most earnest prayers for me, remember it comes from an apostle who is now suffering with cheerfulness, and patience in bonds, for preaching the gospel to you *Gentiles*, (*Eph.* iii. 1.) and who affectionately prays, that the free favour of God, the Father, Son and Spirit, (2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.) and all its precious fruits, manifestations and effects, in a work of grace here, and in glory hereafter may abound toward you. In testimony of my sincerity in this benediction, and of my hope that it will be fully answered, I say, *Amen*.

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what equity, mildness, and mercy, would masters treat their servants, were they deeply impressed with the thought that they themselves have a greater Master in heaven, to whom they must give an account of all their behaviour toward those that are under them! And O what need is there of daily prayers, with thanksgivings, in the family and closet, for ourselves and others; and particularly for Christ's ministering servants, that they may be wise and faithful, courageous and successful, in unfolding the mysteries of the gospel, without restraint from their adversaries! And what need have Christians of wisdom from above, to behave prudently towards unbelievers, that they, by word and deed, may recommend religion to them, and make a proper apology on all occasions for it! With what pleasure should ministers own, and speak well of their faithful fellow-labourers, and fellow-sufferers, of every denomination! With what earnest wrestlings, (as all our prayers ought to be) at the throne of grace, should they plead for such churches, especially, as they are most immediately concerned with,

with, that they may be confirmed in the whole will of God ! What a tender sympathizing spirit should they have, and shew toward them ! How cordially should they salute all their saints, and particularly those who are eminent for godliness, and under whose conduct their families are lively emblems of a church of Christ ! And how cheerfully should they recommend it to them, to maintain and express the like affectionate wishes one for another ! The holy scriptures are written for their use ; they have a common interest and concern in them, and ought carefully to read them, and to be solicitous, that they, who minister in sacred things, may be faithful in the discharge of the trust that Christ has committed to them ; and when any of them are in bonds for the gospel's sake, How ought churches to lay it to heart, that they may be enabled to make suitable improvements of such a providence, for their own establishment in the truth, to which these noble confessors bear their testimony with faith and patience ! For these, and all other valuable purposes, may grace, the fountain of all good, be with them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth ! Amen.

A PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
First Epistle of the Apostle PAUL  
TO THE  
THESSALONIANS,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

The Preface to the First EPISTLE to the  
THESSALONIANS.

**T**HESSALONICA, which signifies the victory of *Thessalia*, being rebuilt by the famous *Philip of Macedon*, was so called in memory of the conquest he obtained over the *Thessalians*, and was the metropolis of *Macedonia*. The church gathered there consisted of converts, partly from among the *Jews* and proselytes of the gate, as appears from *Acts* xvii. 4. and partly from among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, as appears from *chap.* i. 9. of this epistle. They were exceeding dear to the apostle *Paul*, as eminent seals of his ministry, which had been lately blessed to their conversion ; and he was tenderly and solicitously concerned for them ; because, soon afterwards, he was violently driven away from them, all of a sudden, through the furious assaults of the unbelieving *Jews*, *Acts* xvii. 1,—10. which prevented his ministering

nistring at *Thessalonica*, so long as he could have wished, for their further establishment in the faith.

He was very desirous to have returned to them, and attempted it once and again; but Satan by his wicked instrument hindered him, as he tells us, *chap. ii. 18.*; and, fearing lest that busy adversary might have unsettled them, he sent *Timothy* to them; and upon his return with comfortable tidings of their state, wrote this Epistle to encourage their continuing to stand fast in the faith, and not to be stumbled at the tribulations that beset him for the gospel's sake, as in other places, so while he was among them.

This is *the first* of all the epistles that he wrote, which, as is supposed, was about the year of our Lord 52; and it is generally agreed, that he sent it, not from *Athenis*, as the postscript says, but from *Corinth*, about a year after he had been at *Thessalonica*.

He begins it with a salutation and affectionate thanksgiving to God for his distinguishing grace, as it was evidently manifested in its remarkable effects upon them, *chap. i.* And to induce them to persevere in the faith, which they had received, he reminds them of his own unblameable behaviour, together with his labours and sufferings, and the success of his ministry among them; and expresses his earnest desire of visiting them again, out of his great love to them, whom he looked upon as his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, *chap. ii.* But as he could not go himself, he, in his tender care for them, sends *Timothy* to see how matters stood with them, and to comfort them under their tribulations, and establish them in the faith; and when *Timothy* returned and gave a good account of them, it revived his soul, and he heartily prayed, that, if it were the will of God, he might have an opportunity of making them another visit; but, whether this might be so ordered by Providence, or not, that the Lord would establish them in faith, love, and holiness, *chap. iii.* And, lest he should not be able to see them again, he refers them to the directions he had given while he was with them, to guard them against all iniquity, and particularly against every kind of uncleanness; commends them for their brotherly love, and intreats them to abound therein yet more and more, and to acquit themselves with diligence and honour in the duties of their several stations: and, to comfort them under the loss of their deceased Christian friends, he sets before them the blissful state to which they shall be raised, when all the saints, both living and dead, shall meet together to be with Christ at his coming to judge the world, *chap. iv.* And as the particular time of Christ's coming to judgment is unknown, and will be, on a sudden, at unawares, though certain in its season, he exhorts them to constant watchfulness, and preparation for it; and then adds some admonitions relating to their decent behaviour toward those that were set over them in the Lord, and towards all they had to do with; suggesting also several other important duties, in which they were all concerned; and concludes with an excellent prayer for them, and earnest desire of their's for himself, and with salutations, and a charge that this Epistle be read in their church, with whom he leaves this benediction, *chap. v.*

## C H A P. I.

The apostle salutes the church at Thessalonica, and blesses God for them, in reflection on their faith, love, and patience, as evident tokens of their election, which was manifested in the efficacious manner with which the gospel came to them, 1,—5. And describes its powerful, exemplary, and famous effects upon their hearts and lives, 6,—10.

## TEXT.

**PAUL**, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## PARAPHRASE.

**PAUL**\*, together with Silas and Timothy, his assistants in the works of the Lord at Thessalonica, send greeting, (see the notes on Acts xv. 22. and 1 Cor. i. 1.) to the church of Christ, which has lately been planted by means of our ministry, (Acts xvii. 1,—4, 14.) and ordinarily assembles, for religious worship and discipline, at that renowned metropolis of Macedonia, and consists of believers in God the Father, as the only true God, in distinction from the idolatrous Gentiles, who worship them which by nature are no gods, (Gal. iv. 8.) and of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only true Messiah, (see the notes on John xiv. 1. and xvii. 3.) in distinction from the unbelieving Jews, who deny him; and so we regard you as persons that are in union, and have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, (1 John i. 3.) May all the riches of divine love and favour, which is the fountain of every blessing; and, as the fruit of this; may all manner of prosperity, inclusive of every desirable sort of peace with God, and others, and in your own souls, be multiplied abundantly to all and every one of you, according to the scheme of salvation; from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator and Peace-maker, who has purchased all blessings for us by his blood; and freely communicates them to us by his Spirit, in an inseparable concurrence with the Father, (see the note on Rom. i. 7.)

1 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

2 We daily offer up our cheerful and solemn thanks to God on behalf of your whole church, and mention you in our stated and occasional prayers with gratitude and praise, and with fervent supplications for his perfecting all that concerns you;

3 Being

## NOTE.

\* As these Thessalonians were the seals of Paul's apostleship, and there were none among them, that pretended to dispute his authority, or vie with him in it; there was no occasion for his asserting it here, as he does in his inscription of the epistles to churches in which there were false apostles, that would depreciate him, and set themselves

up in opposition to him: And, perhaps, as this was the first epistle that he wrote, his great modesty might restrain him from asserting his apostolic character, till he found a necessity for it; because he humbly thought himself to be the "least of the apostles, and not meet to be called an apostle." (1 Cor. xv. 9.)

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father:

3 Being excited hereunto by a constant habitual sense, and frequent recollection, of the unfeigned faith, which God has wrought in you, and which shews itself to be, not a dead, but living faith, by its genuine operation unto all evangelical obedience: we have also a joyful remembrance of your ardent love to Christ, and to all that belong to him, which generally exerted itself in the great pains ye took to succour and secure us, when we were in the utmost danger at *Thessalonica*, (*Acts xvii. 5,—10.*); as also in performing every office of kindness one to another, and to all the saints and servants of Christ, for his sake: and we reflect with pleasure on the fruits of this faith and love, as they have produced in you a lively hope of eternal life, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and *that* with patient continuance in well-doing under all your tribulations; and with a quiet waiting for God's time of crowning your hopes with enjoyment, (*see Heb. x. 36.*) we can solemnly appeal to the all-seeing God, for the sincerity of our professions of thankfulness, and constant remembrance of you in our prayers\*; and are firmly persuaded that your faith, love, and hope, are exercised with all uprightness of heart, as in the sight and presence of God, even your and our Father, who has made us his children, by adopting and regenerating grace.

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

4 From these peculiar and evident fruits of God's distinguishing favour to you, our dear brethren beloved of the Lord, and of us for his sake†, we, arguing fab-

#### N O T E S.

\* *In the sight of God, or before God,* (*ὑποπαραστάει το Θεῷ*) may refer, either to the apostle's "blessing God for, and affectionately remembering the Thessalonians; or to "their work of faith and labour of love, and "patience of hope," according to the different turns given to his clause in the paraphrase.

† According to the different ways of pointing this sentence in the Greek, (*ἀγαποῦμεν ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἐκλεκτοὶ ἐστέ*) of God may be joined either to *beloved*, or to *your election*, which proceeded from the free love of God: And the apostle's *knowing the election* of these Thessalonians seems to have been, not by an immediate revelation, but only in the ordinary way of charitably judging about the election of any person whatsoever: For, in the connection of this with the preceding and following verses, he manifestly proves the cause from its effect, by which it may be known, and without which its ordinarily impossible for any one to know it, with reference, either to himself or others; since, who are God's elect, is an entire secret in his own breast, till it appears

by its distinguishing effects. (*See 1 Pet. i. 10.*) But had our apostle meant, as some would have it, that he knew God's purpose of receiving idolatrous Gentiles into the gospel-church, by immediate revelation, he had this knowledge *before* the Thessalonians were converted or effectually called; and therefore had no need of arguing from the effect to the cause to ascertain it. And as we must conclude from *Acts xvii. 4.* that this church consisted, not only of idolatrous Gentiles, but also of Jews and proselytes of the gate, that were converted there, the election here spoken of may well be supposed, not to be national, but to include persons of all those former characters; and to which ever of them the gospel became effectual, it was "according to the election of grace, or the eternal purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, (*Rom. xi. 5. and Ephes. i. 4.*) And that the election here intended was not barely to outward privileges, but to saving benefits, appears from the whole current of the context, which speaks of its peculiar distinguishing and sanctifying fruits.



from the effect to the cause, justly conclude, and ye yourselves may be well satisfied, in the same way, that ye were freely chosen of God from all eternity to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, (2 Epist. ii. 13.)

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

5 For the gospel, which was preached by me, and by Silas and Timothy, (v. 1.) my fellow-labourers among you, did not only reach your ears in the outward publication of it, as it did the ears of many others without any saving effect; but was also attended with a divine energy, which brought it home to your hearts, by the special operation of the Holy Spirit\*, as well as was attested by the miracles he wrought in confirmation of its divine authority; and so it begat an unshaken satisfaction in your own souls, as to its truth and importance; and good hope, through grace, (2 Epist. ii. 16.) as to your own personal interests in its blessings, by means of what ye experienced of the great and excellent fruits of our ministry among you; in which (as ye well know) we laboured with great plainness of speech, meekness, and patience, and evident tokens of God's owning us, and giving us glorious success; notwithstanding all the violence and persecution that we endured on your account, in our love to you, and concern for your salvation.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

6 And such were the happy effects of the gospel's coming in this powerful manner to your souls, that immediately hereupon ye become imitators, (*μιμηται*) in faith, obedience, and patience, of us, who preached it, and with whom ye comforted, Acts xvii. 4. (see the note there) and ye were therein followers of our great Lord and Master himself, who is our only perfect example, and in whose steps we, and ye after us, trod, (1 Cor. xi. 1.) ye having firmly believed the word of his grace, even in the midst of the severest troubles, that both we and yourselves were exposed to for its sake, (Acts xvii. 5.—9.), and having received it with such inward consolation of the Holy Spirit, as made you a rich amends for

#### N O T E S.

by means of the gospel, (see the note on ver. 5.) and from the apostle's like thanksgiving to God, for his having, "from the beginning chosen them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit," (2 Epist. ii. 13.) which is more than being chosen to a belief of the gospel.

\* "The gospel's coming in power and in the Holy Ghost" was more, than its coming with the attestation of miracles, as appears by its saving effects: For the "Thessalonians thereupon became followers of

"the apostles and of the Lord," and were eminent examples of faith and holiness; and the idolatrous Gentiles among them "turned from idols to serve the living and true God, with hope in Christ for deliverance from the wrath to come," which carried an undeniable proof of an effectual and saving change upon their hearts and lives, by the power of the Holy Ghost, with which the gospel came to them, as is represented in the following verses to the end of the chapter.

for them, sweetly supported you under them, and enabled you to bear them with Christian fortitude and patience.

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

7 So that ye yourselves became eminent, encouraging, and exemplary patterns (*τύποι*) of faith, patience, and holiness to all the believers found about you, in the two large Grecian provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, whether they were converted before you, as at Philippi in Macedonia; or after you, as at Athens and Corinth in Achaia, (see the note on *ver.* 8.)

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not so speak any thing.

8 For the gospel, which is properly the word of the Lord Jesus, as he is the author and the main subject of it, having had such glorious success among you, was published from thenceforward, with great reputation and advantage, and, as it were, with a loud echo of its praises, (*ἡχώρει*) far and near; insomuch that the fame of your faith, as going out to, and terminating upon God in Christ, and manifested by its remarkably holy and exemplary fruits in your lives, (*ἡ ἀγαθότης*) has gone forth, and is commonly talked of, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but with still wider extent in various other places; so that we ourselves have no occasion to say any thing about it, as we otherwise should.

9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.

9 For wherever we travel, we meet with people that are so full of it, as to anticipate us by beginning themselves to speak, with wonder and joy, of the happy effects of our ministry among you; as, particularly, they are ready to tell us what a cheerful reception ye gave us, at our first coming among you, though it was in the most afflicted circumstances, (*ver.* 6.) and how, by means of our preaching, ye were so effectually wrought upon, as that those of you, who were heathens before, at once voluntarily and publicly renounced your former idolatry, and turned away with indignation and abhorrence from all your fictitious deities to him, who is by nature God; believing in him, and yielding yourselves up entirely to him, to own, reverence, worship and adore, serve and glorify him, who has all perfection of life, blessedness and immortality, originally and essentially in, and of himself, and is the fountain of all sorts of life, whether natural, spiritual,

or

#### N O T E

\* The church of Thessalonica, I apprehend, was not the mother-church of Macedonia and Achaia where the first converts were made, and from whence the gospel was first propagated in those provinces, as that at Jerusalem was of the Jews, and that at Antioch was of the Gentiles: For converts were made at Philippi in Macedonia before those of Thessa-

lonica, as appears from the 16th and 17th chapters of the Acts. But the gospel went from Thessalonica with the more evident and recommending demonstrations of its excellence and power, on account of its eminently wonderful effects upon them, as appeared in their exemplary behaviour.

or eternal, to others; and is the only true God in distinction from all mere creatures whatsoever, though not to the exclusion of the great Mediator, who is God, equally and together with the Father, in his original nature, in whom ye are also brought to believe, (see the notes on *John* xiv. 1. and xvii. 3.)

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

10 And to wait with faith, preparation and patience, desire and joyful hope, under all present sufferings, for the glorious appearing of the eternal Son of the Father from heaven\*, who will come to *be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe our testimony concerning him; (2 Thes. i. 10.)* even Jesus, the divine Saviour, who by his obedience and sufferings unto death purchased redemption for us, and by his almighty power (*δυναμις*) does, and finally will deliver us from the dreadful wrath of an incensed God, that is coming apace, (*ερχομαι*) and will be ever incessantly coming, like a perpetual torrent of flaming vengeance, upon all the unbelieving and ungodly, to their everlasting destruction, (*2 Thes. i. 8, 9.*)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a distinguishing mercy is it, when the gospel comes to any of our souls, not in word only, but with the special impressive power of the Holy Ghost! This is an evident proof of our eternal election, which can be known only by its fruits; such as faith, love, and patience under sufferings for Christ's sake; a thorough conversion in heart and life from every idol to the true and living God; a holy imitation of Christ and of his servants, as far as they follow him; and a hopeful expectation of his glorious coming to rid us of all our troubles. And how desirable is it to have these tokens of God's love, and of the efficacy of his grace in an eminent degree! Such receive his word with full assurance of its divine truth, excellence, and importance, and with joy in the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding all the tribulations that may befall them for its sake; they are a credit to the gospel, and noble examples to other believers; and are spoken of with admiration and joy to all that hear of them, and love the truth as it is in Jesus. With what pleasure do his ministering servants own one another, and reflect on every remarkable success of their labours, and on a testimony in the consciences of their hearers, that the power of the Spirit is with them! They affectionately salute the dear converts; they abound in thankfulness for them, and continually recommend them in their prayers to the grace and blessing of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, in every remembrance of them. And O how animating to every true believer is the thought of the eternal Son of God, as the risen Jesus, who, having saved them from their sins, delivered them from the wrath to come.

### N O T E.

\* As the first coming of Christ was the object of the faith, desire and hope of the "Old Testament-church, who waited for the consolation of Israel, and looked for redemption in Jerusalem," (*Luke* ii. 25, 28.) so his second coming is of the New, who are "looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:" (*Titus* ii. 13.)

They firmly believe that he will certainly come again, though they know not when; and therefore continue waiting for it with such exercises of grace, and performances of duty, as may best encourage their hope, that when he "who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory," (*Col. iii. 4.*)

## C H A P. II.

The apostle, to encourage their progress in faith and holiness, reminds them of the manner of his preaching and behaviour among them, 1,—12. And of their receiving the gospel as the word of God, which effectually worked in them, 13,—16. And assures them of his joy on their account, and his desire of coming to them again, 17,—20.

## TEXT.

FOR yourselves, brethren, know our encouragement in unto you, that it was not in vain.

## PARAPHRASE.

**W**ELL may I speak of you, as I have, (*chap. i.*) with the utmost affection, hope and confidence: for I can appeal to your own consciences, dear brethren, that ye yourselves experimentally know the glorious power and effect of my coming, with *Silas* and *Timothy*, (*chap. i. 1.*) to preach the gospel to you; that it was not (*κεν*) about vain and profitable things, nor with a mere empty sound of words; nor was it without good fruit, which we were assured it would not be, as from God's promise in general, (*Isa. lv. 11.*) so especially from the extraordinary manner in which he called us to preach it in *Macedonia*, (*Acts xvi. 9, 10.*) of which your's is the chief city; and therefore no ill treatment, that we before had met with in that province, could discourage our hopes of better success among you †.

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at *Philippi*, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much consolation.

2 But even, after we had lately endured the greatest cruelties for the gospel's sake, before we could reach so far as you, and had been treated with the utmost indignity, as ye well know we were at *Philippi*, another famous city of *Macedonia*, (*Acts xvi. 23, 24.*) we were nevertheless animated with holy resolution, with liberty of spirit and of speech, and with undaunted courage, (*παρρησιασμεθα*) in humble dependence on our gracious God for protection and success, openly to publish the everlasting gospel to you; which not we, but God himself is the author of, and we preach in his name with mighty zeal and fervour of spirit, as it were to a great agony, (*τολασ αγου*) in striving for your conversion, and against the furious opposition which the unbelieving *Jews* there also made against us, (*Acts xvii. 5, &c.*)

3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile;

3 For our address to you, whether in a way of exhortation to duty, or of consolation (*παρηγορια*) under sufferings for Christ's sake, was not by preaching any erroneous

## N O T E.

† But even (*ολλα κας*) that introduces the next verse, requires some such thought, as the paraphrase has added, at the close of this, relating to the apostle's hope of success among the *Thessalonians*, and his not being intimidated by the severe usage he had met

with in other parts of *Macedonia*. This preserves a good connection, which is not otherwise easily to be discern'd; and therefore some suppose (without sufficient grounds, as appears to me) that the apostle there *causes* upon a new head of discourse.

roneous doctrines, like the false teachers, to seduce you, but the pure uncorrupted gospel; nor was it by teaching any principles that lead to licentiousness, but to all holiness in heart, and life; nor was it by hypocritical pretences of piety and zeal, and love to you, for carrying on sinister views to worldly advantage, but in the sincerity of our hearts for the glory of God, and the good of your souls: so that there was no falshood or impurity in the matter, nor insincerity or selfishness in the manner of our preaching.

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

4 But as we were approved of God (*διδουµενοι*) to be authorised and furnished for, and counted faithful to be intrusted with a dispensation of the gospel, (*1 Tim. i. 11, 12. and Tit. i. 3.*) as stewards of the mysteries of God, (*1 Cor. iv. 1.*) even so according to the design of this honourable and important trust, we publish it wherever we come, without any alteration, but exactly as we received it from him; not in such a manner, as might be suited to the corrupt taste, notions, or fancies of men, to tickle their ears, gain their applause, and gratify their humours, lusts and passions, by prophesying smooth things to them, or by concealing any necessary doctrine, (*Acts xx. 21, 27.*) but with all purity and sincerity, as may be best approved in the sight of the great and holy God, (*Gal. i. 10.*) who, we are sensible, searches and knows our hearts, (*Rev. ii. 23.*)

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness.

5 For we never, in dealing with any sort of people, made use of fawning speeches to ingratiate ourselves with them, or flatter them with compliments, or with vain hopes of salvation in a course of sin, impenitence and unbelief, or upon the foot of their own strength and righteousness, as ye yourselves can testify from all that ye have seen, or heard of our conduct, and manner of preaching; nor did we ever put on a cloke, or false pretence of religion, to cover, and set a gloss upon secret designs of making an advantage of you, like those false teachers, who, through *covetousness, with feigned words, make a merchandise* of their hearers, (*2 Pet. ii. 3.*) no, we can solemnly appeal to the heart-searching God for the truth of this.

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

6 Nor were we ever ambitious of vain-glory, or of seeking the honour that comes from man only, after the example of those that tread in the steps of the scribes and Pharisees, (*John v. 44. and xii. 43.*) We never contrived, intended, or endeavoured to be admired, caressed and applauded, while we were either among you, or any other people that we have ministered

stred to †; no, nor did we assume a high tone of authority, nor seek after the honour of a maintenance at your expence, lest some should have thought it a burdensome tax upon them, though we might have insisted upon it, as the apostles of Christ, and servants sent forth by him, who said, *The labourer is worthy of his hire*, (Luke x. 7. see also 2 Cor. chap. ix. and the notes there.)

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

7 But, on the contrary, we behaved with all humility of mind, modesty, meekness and gentleness among you, and with such self-denial, as might best show our parental care and concern for your spiritual benefit; even as a tenderly affectionate nursing mother suckles her beloved infants, nourishes them in her bosom, bears with their weakness and frowardness, and does all she can for their ease, help and comfort.

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

8 We in like manner, being affectionately desirous of your edification and salvation, took great pleasure, (*involuntarius*) not only in communicating unto you the gospel of the grace of God, and distributing suitable portions of it in due season to you, as to *new-born babes, who desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye might grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. but also in drawing out our own souls with compassion towards you, (*Isa. lviii. 10.*) in abundant labours, even to the exhausting of our strength and spirits, and cheerfully hazarding our lives, which we were ready to lay down for your sakes; because ye were exceeding dear to us, who have your spiritual and eternal concerns entirely at heart.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God,

9 In proof of this, I need only remind you, my beloved brethren, who cannot have forgot how I, and my companions, laid ourselves out in the most fatiguing and painful services, while we were among you: For ye very well know, that we not only spent our strength in ministerial labours; but, when we were not employed in them, we worked early and late at our secular callings to get our own livelihood, being unwilling to take contributions from any of you for a maintenance, that we might not seem burdensome; but might preach the gospel of the grace of God at free cost, and thereby cut off all occasions from our adversaries, who would fain reproach us, as though we wanted to make a gain of you. (See the note on 1 Cor. ix. 1.)

10 We

#### N O T E.

\* As maintenance is a part of the honour that is to be paid to ministering servants, (see the note on 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.) it seems to me, though the word here used be different, to be included also in the *glory*, which the apostle did not seek of the *Thessalonians*, or

other churches: For his adding, with reference hereunto, *when we might have been burdensome*, plainly leads our thoughts to his having waved the right of maintenance, which he might have claimed.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holy and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As you know, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children,)

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory.

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

10 We can appeal to your own consciences to witness for us, as far as ye have been capable of observing our deportment; and, which is still greater, and more abundantly to our satisfaction, we can solemnly appeal to the all-seeing and heart-searching God, who knows our principles, motives and ends, as well as our external acts, that we exercised ourselves in a conscientious discharge of all the duties of religion toward God, and of righteousness toward men; and in such a sober, humble, benevolent and inoffensive manner, in the whole of our conversation, as might best recommend the good ways of the Lord among you that were brought to the faith of Christ by means of our ministry.

11, 12 We not only were careful to set you a good example, by our own regular behaviour among you; but, as ye likewise well know, we counselled, intreated and excited every one of you, by all proper arguments, to practise the like Christian-duties that are incumbent upon you; and did all that in us lay to encourage you thereunto, and to comfort you under all your tribulations; and we with the greatest earnestness testified to you, (*μαρτυροῦμεν*) in the name of the Lord Jesus, both publicly and privately, (Acts xx. 20.) with all the authority and affection of a father to his children, that ye ought to live in such a becoming manner as is suitable to the holy nature and will of God, and to his high and special favour toward you, whom, as appears in its fruits he effectually called by the gospel, to partake of all the blessings and honours of his kingdom of grace in this world, and of his kingdom of glory in the world to come.

13 And in reflection on what God has done by us among you, we are exceeding thankful to him, blessing and praising his holy name in our daily addresses to him; because, when we were sent to preach the gospel at *Thessalonica*, ye not only gave us the hearing, which others of that city refused, (Acts xvii. 5.) but, upon hearing our message, your hearts, like *Lydia's*, (Acts xvi. 14.) were opened to attend to it, and embrace it with reverence, faith, love and obedience; and so ye believed and affectionately entertained it, not as a human scheme, or upon the foot of human authority; but as a revelation from God, (which it really is,) and upon the foot of his authority, as a doctrine, which, not we, but God himself, in his infinite wisdom and grace, is the contriver and author of, and commissioned us to preach; and which, through his special blessing, works so powerfully and efficaciously with internal energy, as to produce a happy and holy change

change in your sentiments, principles and views, hearts and lives, who by faith received it, and who have thereby the best, the most satisfying and advantageous demonstration to your own consciences, that the gospel itself, together with its wonderful influence upon you, is, and could not but be, entirely of God.

14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:

14 The powerful and blessed effects of this gospel upon you, my dear brethren in Christ, are evident, as has been hinted, (*chap. i. 6.*) in your so readily receiving it, tho' attended with so much outward affliction: For, from the time of your embracing it with faith and love, ye became imitators, not only of us, the servants of our Lord, but also the churches, that are gathered in his name, according to his appointment, for religious worship in Judea; and that particularly in their courage and patience under the tribulations which they endure for his sake: For, at the instigation of furious zealots at *Thessalonica*, (*Acts xvii. 5, 6.*) ye yourselves also have been insulted and abused; and, with heroic Christian firmness of mind, have calmly submitted to the same sort of persecutions from people of your own country, as those churches, for the same cause, have cheerfully undergone the cruel usage they met with from the Jews in their parts.

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.

15 Who, in the madness of their rage, embroiled their wicked hands, (*Acts ii. 23.*) in the blood of the Lord of glory, the Saviour of his people from their sins; and therein shewed themselves to be in spirit and temper, as well as by descent, the children of those that dealt in the like unnatural and rebellious manner with the ancient prophets, which God had raised up among them, (*Mat. xxiii. 31, 37.*) and they have carried on this violent persecution with the utmost severity against us, the apostles and servants of Christ, and professors of his name, and particularly against myself at *Thessalonica*, and many other places. And though they pretend to be God's peculiar favourites, and that in killing us, as they did *Stephen* and *James*, (*Acts vii. 59, 60, and xii. 2.*) they are doing him good service, (*John xvi. 2.*) they are really so far from being accepted of him, or approving themselves to him, that they act directly contrary to his merciful and holy nature and will, law and gospel; and are the worst of enemies, not only to us, but to the common happiness of all mankind, and particularly of the *Gentiles*, whom they treat with the utmost indignation, contempt and scorn;

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved,

16 Doing what in them lyes to hinder us, (*κολλομεν* *ημας*) the ministers of Christ, from preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*, as being envious at their conversion, in order



saved, to fill up their sins away: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire,

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us.

order to their eternal salvation; they still persisting, by divine permission, in their obstinate prejudices and opposition to the Messiah and his servants, wherever they come, to fill up the measure of their own and their fathers iniquities, (*Mat. xxiii. 32.*) till God will bear with them no longer, as will soon appear by the awful event: For righteous vengeance has begun to seize \*, and is about to come upon them in the most dreadful executions, (*the wrath*) to compleat their ruin, and put an end to their church and state, without redress, till the fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in. (*Rom. xi. 25.*)

17 But we, dear brethren, were, sorely against our will, forced away from you all on a sudden, for a short season, which will soon be over, like that of an hour (*προς καιρον ορας*) by reason of their outrage, who hunted after our blood, (*Acts xvii. 5, 10.*); so that we could no longer continue with safety in person among you; which went as near our hearts as it could to the heart of the tenderest dying parents, whether nursing mothers, or affectionate fathers, (*ver. 7, 11.*) to be torne away from their weak, helpless and exposed orphans, (*αποπαροιστησις*) that would dearly miss them: But our hearts are still as much as ever with you; and considering how we were snatched away from you unawares, and what need ye have of our further counsel, admonitions, cautions and encouragements, to animate and fortify you against the dangers that surround you, we have been the more exceedingly diligent, and have tried all possible means, with the most affectionate desire, and earnest solicitude of soul, to get an opportunity of coming to you again, and conversing with you face to face.

18 † For we fain would have returned to you, and attempted it time after time, even I *Paul* especially; but Satan, that great adversary to Christ and his gospel, to us his ministering servants, and to your souls, cut out work for us in other places, as particularly at *Berea* and *Athens*, (*Acts xvii. 13,—34.*) by sowing the seeds of discord and heresy, and spiriting up a violent opposition to the truth, which rendered it necessary for us to make a stand against him and his instruments, for the vindication of the gospel, and establishment of the saints

#### N O T E.

\* The verb, (*ερχασθαι*) being the first *Aorist*, is of indeterminate signification, and may, I think, be here more properly render'd is about to come, than is come upon them to the utmost; because, though the destruction of that people, and of their city and temple, were drawing on apace, it was not fully ac-

complished, till about twenty years afterwards.

† The *Alexandrian* and *Claremont* copies, instead of (*διο*) wherefore, read (*διου*) for; and this seems to agree best with the apostle's design in professing the necessity of his great desire to come and see them.

saints in these parts; and so he laid such obstacles in our way, to entangle and incumber us, as has hitherto prevented our design of coming to you: But ye may be well assured we are still as mindful of you, and as sincerely and affectionately desirous, as ever, to return to you, if the Lord permit.

19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

19 For what is the chief matter of our hope with respect to the happy fruit of our ministry, to animate us to it? or what is our chief joy in it? or what the crown of our glorying, as the reward of our labours at the end of it? Are not ye in an eminent manner, my dearly beloved, whom, among other converts, we expect to see at the right hand of Christ, and to present as a chaste virgin to him, (2 Cor. xi. 2.) at his second coming, *when he who is our life shall appear, and ye, together with us, shall appear with him in glory?* (Col. iii. 4. †)

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

20 For in reflection on what ye already are through grace, and in prospect of what ye shall then further be by means of our ministrations to you, ye certainly are at present the glory of our ministry, and the joy of our hearts; and we doubt not but we shall find you so to a still more exalted degree, at the day of Christ; *when they that be wise shall shine, as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever,* (Daniel xii. 3.)

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a joy of heart is it to the servants of the Lord Jesus, to be able to appeal to their hearers, and to God himself, that they have been courageous, upright, laborious, humble, tender, self-denying, unblameable, and disinterested, free from covetousness and vain-glory, in their ministrations and behaviour, even in the midst of persecutions and reproaches for the sake of Christ, as persons intrusted with the gospel, and seeking, in dispensing it, not to please men, but God; whom they consider as the searcher of their hearts! With what grateful reflections do they bless his holy and gracious name, when he crowns their labours with success! And how happy is it for the attendants on their ministry to know, by their own experience, that it has not been unprofitable to them; but that they have been enabled to receive it with reverence, faith, and love, merely upon the foot of its divine authority, and have felt its powerful operation in their own souls, to animate them unto all patience in suffering for Christ, after the example of the most celebrated churches, and unto all holy conversation and godliness, suitable to their privileges and obligations, as true believers, whom God has effectually called by the gospel, to inherit all the blessings and honours of his kingdom of grace here and of glory hereafter! Alas! how desperately malignant against Christ, and his servants and disciples, is a spirit of persecution! It is a direct imitation of the great adversary the devil, and promotes his interest and designs, under his wicked influence; it fills up the measure of their iniquities, who persist in the practice of it; and ripens them for destruction, till wrath comes

#### N O T E.

† In the like affectionate flow of language they, to whom he was writing, were the the apostle wrote to the *Philippians*, chap. only matter of his joy, (see the note there.)  
v. 5. to endear himself to them, as though

comes upon them to the uttermost. But with what parental tenderness do faithful pastors sympathize with their flocks in their tribulations! How gladly would they visit, assist, encourage, and comfort them under their trials, as opportunity offers! And with what flowing affection do they think of the dear seals of their ministry, as their glory and joy, and as those whom they trust the Lord Jesus Christ will publicly own, as the crown of their rejoicing, when he shall come to judge the world at the last day.

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle gives still further proof of his great affection to them, in his having sent Timothy to establish and comfort them, 1,—5. In his rejoicing at the good tidings of their faith and love, 6,—9. And in his praying for an opportunity of returning to them, and for their perseverance and increase in grace, till the second coming of Christ, 10,—13.*

## TEXT.

**W**herefore, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone:

## PARAPHRASE.

**S**O great was the solicitude of my mind about you, as young converts in the perilous circumstances in which I was forced all of a sudden to leave you, that when, upon my arriving at Athens, (Acts xvii. 15.) and meeting with various disappointments of my scheme for returning to you, I grew more uneasy in my concern for you, than I well knew how any longer to bear, or conceal from you; (*μὴ οὐκ ἔκρυπτον*) \* I rather chose to be left there alone, to struggle with the many difficulties I had to encounter, in disputes with the Jews, and with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, (Acts xvii. 17, 18.) than to remain uncertain about the state of your affairs, or neglect any thing that might contribute to your help.

2 And sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

2 And therefore, though I much needed the company and assistance of the dear Timothy, who was there, and might have been very useful to me, and is indeed my affectionate brother, and a faithful ministering servant after God's own heart, commissioned by his authority, and richly endowed with gifts and graces, to promote his cause and kingdom in the world, and is a laborious copartner with me in the work of preaching that blessed gospel of salvation which has Christ for its author and principal subject; yet, for your sakes, I cheerfully parted with that excellent young evangelist, and dispatched him to you, that he might know how matters

## N O T E.

\* Though Silvanus or Silas and Timothy were with the apostle Paul at Corinth when he wrote this epistle from thence, chap. i. 1. yet Silas seems not to have been with him while he was at Athens; and so he was alone after he had sent Timothy from thence to Thessalo-

nica, (see the note on Acts xviii. 5.) and though he still speaks in the plural number, he had given notice, chap. ii. 18. that what he was saying, in a way of concern for them, and desire of seeing them, related in a peculiar manner to himself.

matters go with you, (*ver.* 5.); and that, supplying my place, he might labour to strengthen and confirm your faith in Christ, and in the great doctrines of the gospel, and (*παρηγορεῖν*) might exhort you to hold them fast, and help to revive a sweet sense in your souls of the glorious advantages and delights that will result from your faith, even in this world, and much more in the world to come.

3 That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed therunto.

3 That so none of you might be disheartened, or staggered, at the persecutions which both yourselves and we, the ministers of Christ, have endured for his sake: And ye ought not to be discouraged or shaken in mind on this account; for as the worst, as well as the best, that is to be expected from your faithful adherence to Christ has been set before you, ye cannot but know, that God, in his eternal, infinitely, wise and holy counsels, has appointed us, the servants and disciples of Jesus, to sufferings for his sake, as well as to be partakers of his glory, (*1 Peter* ii. 12, 13.)

4 For verily when we were with you we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation: even as it came to pass, and ye know.

4 For even when I and my fellow-labourers were present with you †, we warned you before-hand to prepare for the worst, that as all that *will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, and must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, (*2 Tim.* iii. 12. *Acts* iv. 14, 22.); so we should certainly have our share in the common lot; and accordingly, as ye may well remember, it soon afterward proved in the event; ye yourselves having experienced it, and been eye-witnesses of the storm that fell upon us at *Thessalonica*, (*Acts* xvii. 5, &c.)

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

5 When therefore, as was said before, (*ver.* 1, 2.) I could no longer bear the anxiety of my mind concerning you, on account of the difficult and trying circumstances in which I was forced to leave you, I sent the beloved and faithful *Timothy* to see how it fares with your faith; having a *godly jealousy over you*, (*2 Cor.* xi. 2.) lest by the violence of persecutions, and subtle intrigues of false teachers, and by inward suggestions, or any other means, that malicious, artful, and busy adversary, the devil, might have thrown temptations in your way, to turn you back from Christ and the gospel; and so all the hopeful pains, we had taken for your conversion, should have proved to be ineffectual, and the promising

#### N O T E.

† By this time both *Silas* and *Timothy* were come to the apostle at *Corinth*, as appears from *Acts* xviii. 1, 5. compared with the inscription of this epistle: and he here refers to what had pass at *Thessalonica*, when

they were there with him, and so may be understood to include them with himself in what he speaks in the plural number in this, and, mostly at least, in some following verses.

promising appearances should have come to nothing, at least as to some of you, directly contrary to our strong persuasion in the judgment of charity, founded upon visible effects, (*chap. i. 4, 5*, see the note there,) that ye really were the beloved and chosen of God to eternal salvation.

6 But now when Timothy came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us, always desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you :

6 But now my former good hopes concerning you are abundantly confirmed. When our dear brother *Timothy* lately returned from you to us at *Corinth*, (*Acts xviii. 5*. see the note there,) he gave us the most agreeable and satisfactory account, that, notwithstanding all your trials and dangers, ye continue stedfast in the faith of the gospel, and, as a proof of its sincerity, in your love to Christ, and to his ordinances and ways, to one another, and to all his faithful servants; and particularly that ye retain an affectionate remembrance of us in your daily prayers, and a lively sense of the excellent doctrines, we preached, and are often speaking of our persons and ministry with esteem and honour; and that, in reflection on the benefit ye received by our former labours among you, ye are earnestly desirous of seeing us again, as I have assured you, (*chap. ii. 17.*) we also are to see and be further assistant to you.

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you, in all our afflictions and distresses, by your faith :

7 Having therefore, beloved brethren, received these good tidings of your steady perseverance in the faith of Christ, and of its genuine fruits, our rejoicing on your account entirely removed all the painful anxiety about you, that before distressed our minds, (*ver. 5.*); and was a reviving cordial to us under all the troubles that we have been exposed to here for the gospel's sake, (*Acts xviii. 1,—18.*)

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

8 For whatsoever were our difficulties here, and our dejections and solicitude concerning you before, which were like death to us, we are now alive and comfortable in our own souls, and go on cheerfully in our work; since (*scilicet*) ye continue stedfast in your adherence to the Lord Jesus, and *held fast the profession of your faith without wavering*, (*Heb. x. 25.*) *we having no greater joy than to find that ye, our spiritual children, walk in truth.* (*3 John ver. 3, 4.*)

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.

9 For considering the happy state of your affairs, How can we ever be thankful enough, in fresh returns of gratitude and praise to our God, for his grace bestowed upon you, and for giving us hearts to rejoice so exceedingly in it: This we sincerely do, as in his sight and presence, who knows that we are greatly affected in every reflection upon it, and whenever we appear before him in our solemn devotions.

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

10 So near do ye lye to our hearts, that in our stated addresses to God every evening and morning, (see the note on 2 Tim. i. 3.) and at all other seasons of approaching him, our prayers are carried out to an extraordinary degree of importunity and fervour, (*ὡς ἐν ἐκκλήσια*) that, if it be his blessed will, we might have an opportunity of making you a visit once again; and of being farther instrumental, in his hand, for giving you a complete view of the doctrines of faith, which we could not do while we were with you, by reason of our being driven away from you before we were aware, (*Ἀέτις* xvii. 10.) and for establishing, settling, and further building you up in your most holy faith, and helping you against all the defects, which as to its extent, clearness, and lively exercise, still attend that, and every other grace; as there will be something of this kind of defect, in both these considerations of it, not only in young, though growing converts, but even in the most advanced Christians upon earth.

11 Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

11 Now in order to your help herein, we still continue to be importunate in our prayers, that God himself, whose kingdom rules over all, and who is your and our covenant God and Father; and that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, in his office-capacity, is *Head over all things to the church*, (*Ephes. i. 22.*) would please to order, by an over-ruling providence, that our way be made plain, and our course may be soon directed, as it were in a straight line to you, (*καταρτισθῆναι*) free from all the difficulties and avocations that have hitherto obstructed it.

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you:

12 And as we know that all the success of our best designs and endeavours depend entirely on the divine blessing, our heart's desire and prayer is, that, whether we be permitted to come to you, or not, the Lord Jesus, who is a head of influence, as well as of government, would enable you by his Spirit still more and more to grow and increase to an overflowing in your affectionate Christian love\*, and in its abounding fruits and effects, by all manner of means, one towards another, as members of the same church, and of the body of Christ, and as children of the same heavenly Father; and towards all the saints in general, of what denomination soever they be; and even in all good-will towards all men, of every character, with as much sincerity

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle's praying that "the Lord would make them to increase and abound in love one towards another, and his be-  
"teaching them to increase more and more  
"therein," chap. iv. 10. suppose that they

did already live in the practice of it; and he there expressly observes, to their commendation, that they "did it towards all the brethren, which were in all Macedonia."

sincerity and aboundings therein, as our affection does toward you.

13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

13 To the end that, in this way and manner, he may strengthen, settle, and confirm your whole souls in every grace, and in the doctrine of the gospel; and may preserve you blameless in every good word and work, and in all holy conversation, to such a degree, as is at present well-pleasing in the eyes of the infinitely pure and all seeing God, even our reconciled God and Father, and as shall continue until, and issue in your being *presented holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight*, (Col. i. 22.) at the second appearance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who will come to judge the world, with a bright retinue of all his glorified saints and holy angels, at the last day. (*Chap. iv. 16, 17. 2 Theff. i. 7, 10. and Jude, ver. 14.*)

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What an amiable example to gospel-ministers has the great apostle set in his warm affection to, and solicitous concern for the church! They, like him, ought to demonstrate their love to, and use all means for the establishment and comfort of the souls that are under their watch and care; and for taking off discouragements that might arise from the hardships for the sake of the gospel, which God, in his wise and holy counsels and providence, has allotted to them, and given them reason to expect. And, ah! what a touching and painful grief of heart is it to tender and faithful pastors to be afraid, lest, through the subtilty and violence of Satan and his emissaries, professors, of whom they have hoped well, should miscarry, and all the labour that had been spent upon them should come to nothing! But O! the joy that springs up in their souls, and adds a relish to life itself, when they find that their dearly beloved charge continue stedfast in the faith, and that their faith works by love to Christ and one another, and to his ministering servants, especially to such of them as have been instruments of their conversion; and that it spreads with a benevolent temper towards all mankind, as such! How does their knowledge of this engage their thankfulness to God, and animate them to go on with cheerfulness and joy in all their services and sufferings; and to contribute, what in them lies, for the further establishment of their flock's faith and love, and for perfecting all which concerns them, that they may be unblameable in holiness in the sight of God, until, and in the day of Christ! For this they have a longing desire to see them, and be further helpful to them; for this they labour, whether present or absent, looking up to God to direct their way; and for this they continually pray to the God of all grace, as their God and Father in Christ, and to the Lord Jesus, as their great and only Head and Mediator, who will certainly appear a second time to the salvation of all the saints. And may it be our chief concern, and happy lot, to be found among them whom he will gather together to be glorified with him at the last day!

#### C H A P. IV.

*The apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to chastity and holiness in their lives, 1,—8. To brotherly love, a peaceable behaviour, and diligence in their secular callings, 9,—12. And to moderate their grief for the*

the death of godly relations and friends, in consideration of the glorious resurrection of their bodies at Christ's second coming; from which time forwards, all the joints that may then be dead, or living upon the earth, shall be ever with the Lord, 13,—18.

TEXT.

FURTHER - more then we beseech you brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that, as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more,

PARAPHRASE.

IN order to your being established in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all the saints, (chap. iii. 13.) it remains then, (το λοιπον ου) my dearly beloved brethren, that we with all tenderness and affection intreat you, and with all authority in the name, for the sake, and in the stead of our Lord and Saviour, injoin and excite you, that, and as ye have had directions and commands from us, under the inspiration of his Spirit relating to the manner in which ye ought to order the whole course of your religious and moral conversation, in all well-pleasingness to God, thro' Christ; and that, as ye have, generally speaking, attended to our exhortations, and put them into practice hitherto; so ye would labour, by divine grace, to improve and excel therein every day yet more and more.

1 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus,

2 For ye well know, and cannot but remember, what holy precepts we delivered to you, when we were with you, as the rule of your behaviour in all things; and with what solemn and evangelical arguments we enforced, and bound them upon your consciences, by the immediate authority of the exalted Lord and Saviour of his body, the church.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

3 For, as ye have often heard from us, who have preached moral duties, as well as, and upon the foundation of evangelical doctrines, this is the ordaining, approving, and perceptive will of God, yea, is what he intended in bestowing his grace upon you, namely, that, encouraged by the promises of his covenant, ye cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in his fear, (2 Cor. vii. 1.); and particularly, that ye carefully avoid, and keep at the remotest distance from simple fornication, and all manner of uncleanness, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 1.) in thought, word, and deed, and from every thing that tends towards, or might be an enticement to that sin, which the Gentile converts especially among you may have been most guilty of, in the days of their unregeneracy, and may be still too much in danger of being drawn into, through the temptations that surround them from their old acquaintance.

4 That every one of you should know how to possess

4 In opposition thereunto, it is plainly the will of God, that all and every one of you, whether Jewish or Gentile



sets his vessel in sanctification and honour;

Gentile-believers, should know by the gospel, and our ministry of it, his indispensable obligation to, and in what manner, and by what motives, means, and assistances from above, he may occupy and make use of his body \*, which is the receptacle of the soul, with temperance, chastity, and purity, and with honour to God, to human nature, to the Christian character, and to the relation which the bodies of the saints bear to the Holy Ghost, as his temple. (See 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19, 20.)

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

5 The Christian therefore is by no means to indulge, or give way to any gratification of defiling passions, appetites and inclinations, that work with sensual desire after unlawful embraces of any kind; such as are practised by the idolatrous heathens, that are strangers to the knowledge of the only living and true God, and are notoriously infamous for the vilest abominations. (Rom. i. 24,—28.)

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.

6 We furthermore beseech and exhort you, in the name of Christ, that none of you ever dare, by any means, to act a dishonest part of what nature soever, much less to transgress in this matter, so as, through vicious inclinations, to break in upon the matrimonial bond, by going into such a criminal conversation with the wife of any one that may be called a brother † in a religious sense, or even as a member of civil society, and partaker of human nature, as would be an injury to him, and a violation of her chastity: For *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, (Heb. xiii. 4.) so as to execute dreadful vengeance, in a way of just retribution, upon all persons that allow themselves in such wicked practices, as we likewise formerly in our ministrations to, and converses with you, have seriously forewarned you of it, and bore witness against this sin, as abominable in his sight.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

7 For the infinitely holy God, in calling us by his gospel and his grace to the knowledge and fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord, was so far from designing to allow us to live in any iniquity, which is the defilement of our nature, or in any sort of uncleanness; that on the contrary, he has thereby laid us under the highest obligations

#### NOTES

\* His vessel may be supposed to signify his wife, who is called the weaker vessel, (1 Pet. iii. 7.) but it seems more agreeable to the manner of the apostle's arguing here against simple fornication, to understand it of his own body, which is spoken of as a vessel, 1 Sam. xxi. 5. and 1 Cor. ii. 6.

† It is, I think, justly observed by some, that going beyond and defrauding his brother

relates not, chiefly at least, to what we call moral honesty, but to violating the right and property that a man has in his wife, by invading his peculiar claim to her: This makes it all of a piece with the foregoing and following context; and, perhaps, here may be some reference to the unnatural sin between man and man, which was practised among the Gentiles, Rom. i. 26, 27.

obligations, and enforced them by additional motives, to be chaste and holy, in all manner of conversation, and without blame, before him in love.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

8 Whosoever therefore he be, that rejects these admonitions and commands, or treats them with neglect and contempt, does not therein put a slight upon the authority of men, as not to be regarded; but in reality despises, and rejects the authority of the great God himself, as delivering them by us, his inspired servants; even of that God, who hath also given to us his Holy Spirit, to speak in and by us; and so has given a divine sanction to what we say from him; yea, who hath given his enlightning and sanctifying Spirit to all of us who are true believers, to direct and engage a ready compliance with every duty, that he enjoins upon us.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

9 But as to the great duty of love which stands in direct opposition to the fore-mentioned vices, and which ye in a special manner owe to one another, as brethren in the faith, hope, holiness, and blessings of the gospel, I need not inculcate *this* upon you, as though ye were backward to it: For ye yourselves, as Christians, have such a lively sense of your obligation to it, and such strong dispositions for it, by the teachings of God's word and Spirit, as to know from sweet experience what this cordial affection toward fellow-Christians means, as I have already supposed in my prayers, that ye *may increase and abound in it*, (see the note on chap. iii. 12.)

10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren, which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

10 And I am well satisfied that, by the grace of God, ye are inclined and enabled to practise this amiable and important duty, as eminently appears in your exemplary temper and behaviour, not only toward the members of your own church, but even to all your Christian brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, all around you, in the various churches that are planted throughout the province of *Macedonia*; so that nothing remains for me to do on this head, but only to excite and encourage you, my dear brethren, to persevere and excel yet more and more in your servour therein, and in every suitable demonstration of it, as there may be still further occasions for its exercise, and *that* with still wider extent, in all other places, and particularly toward your *Jewish* brethren, the poor saints at *Jerusalem*, (2 Cor. viii. 1,—4. See the notes there.)

11 And

#### N O T E.

4 Who hath given to us his Holy Spirit, may refer either to the apostles, by whom God delivered these precepts, or to believers

whom he has called *not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*, (ver. 7.) accordingly, some ancient copies read *unto you*.

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you.)

11 And to this I would add my earnest intreaties, that ye all would studiously endeavour to show a holy ambition, and eager concern (*φιλοτιμίας*) to behave with a meek and peaceable temper, and not officiously and needlessly intrude into other people's affairs, and create disturbances, either in private families, or the neighbourhood, or in the church or state; and that ye would attend to the duties of your own respective stations, and personal concerns, and labour diligently in the business of your secular calling \*, that, as occasions require, your own hands may be industriously employed in providing for yourselves and families, and for such good things of this life as may enable you to give to them that need your assistance, (*Ephes. iv. 28.*) according to the orders, which we, the apostles and ministers of Christ, gave you to that purpose, when we were with you; which we also recommended by our own example, (see 2 *Thef. iii. 7, 10*)

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

12 My great design in pressing diligence in your honest callings is, that ye may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, (*Titus. ii. 10.*) and may live (*ὡς χριστιανός*) in such an upright, faithful, decent, and becoming manner towards all men, as shall take off prejudices from the minds of those that are out of the pale of the church, and even of enemies to Christianity, who would gladly catch at any opportunity of reproaching it, as if it made its converts an idle and worthless sort of people, rather a burden and scandal, than a benefit and honour to the community; and that, instead of being beholden to the charity of others, ye may have a sufficiency of all needful things to supply your own wants.

13 But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others

13 But to fortify and comfort you, my dear brethren, against the invidious and severe censures of Jewish zealots, as though no uncircumcised Gentile can be admitted to the kingdom of heaven †; and to caution you against such excessive lamentations over the dead, as are

#### N O T E S.

\* To work with their own hands was necessary for those among them whose circumstances called for it, and had a particular respect to the lower ranks of people, who in that trading city were to be employed in manufactures; but it may be carried into a general rule for diligence in discharging the duties of every station, in such a way as is suitable to it; since idleness is a detestable vice, as it is a dishonourable waste of our time and talents, renders us useless in the world, exposes to many temptations, and defeats every valuable end of living; and the slothful is called a "wicked and unprofitable servant, that shall be cast into outer darkness, where

"shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (*Matth. xxv. 16, 30.*)

† In those days there were Jewish zealots that pretended to exclude all from future happiness that were not of their nation, or incorporated with them by being circumcised; and the idolatrous heathens went into excessive howlings and mournings over their dead, whom they looked upon as lost for ever, and especially with respect to the body, the resurrection of which none of them had any notion of; and as the apostle might have his eye upon both these cases, to guard against them, they are referred to in the paraphrase.

thers which have  
no hope.

are used among the *heathens*, and as God has forbidden to his children, (*Deut. iv. 1.*) I am much concerned that ye should know, and be well satisfied about the happiness of those of your pious relations and acquaintance in another world, who died in the faith of Christ, and whose bodies are gone to rest in the grave, as persons fallen asleep to awake again, (see the note on *1 Cor. xi. 30.*) that ye may not grieve and mourn over the loss of them, as your heathen neighbours do over their departed friends, concerning whom they have no hope of their ever rising again to eternal life: But there is no room for your entertaining such a melancholy thought, with respect to deceased believers in Christ:

14 For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

14 For if we are really and firmly persuaded, upon clear evidence, as all true Christians are, that the only Saviour of them that believe in him, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, actually died to expiate their sins, and rose again for their justification, and as the first-fruits of them that sleep in him, (*Rqm. iv. 25.* and *1 Cor. xv. 20.*); we must needs also be fully satisfied upon this ground, that God, (*sic se know*) through the power of the death, and the virtue of the resurrection of Jesus, will quicken them that sleep in union with him, (*ver. 16.*) to an immortal and glorious life; and will gather them together with him, as members with their head, at his second coming, when he who is their life shall appear, and they shall appear with him in glory, (*Col. iii. 4.*)

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not

15 For, to lead you into something still further, that ye as yet are entirely unacquainted with; we, his inspired servants, declare unto you, not of our own head, but by the infallible word of the Lord Jesus, which he has communicated to us by immediate revelation, with authority to publish it to others †, that, considering the whole

#### N O T E.

† To suppose that the apostle thought, and suggested, as if any of the then present age would live upon earth till the time of Christ's second coming to judgment, is to overthrow all dependence upon his authority and inspiration, when he tells us that what he here said was by the word of the Lord; and it is evident that as he often spoke of his own death, so he expected a resurrection to eternal life, together with the believers of that generation, *2 Cor. iv. 14.* and *v. 1.—4.* and *Phil. iii. 10, 11.* And in his 2d epistle to the *Thessalonians*, chap. ii. 1.—8. he sets himself to confute the notion of those that suggested, through a mistake of his meaning in what he here had said, as if the second coming of Christ were then at hand: and he reminds them of what he had told them to the

contrary, when he was with them, which was before he wrote either of his epistles to them. But as believers of all ages and nations make up but one collective body, church, or household of faith, all that belong to that body may, with propriety enough, speak of themselves, as parts of it in the first person plural, relating to the future, as well as present time. In this manner the apostle speaks on this very subject, saying, Behold, "I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed: the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed;" (*1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.* see the note there.) And in common Language among ourselves, when we speak of a nation, or any company of which we are a part, we often say we shall be very happy,

not prevent them which are asleep.

whole church, as one collective body in the present and all succeeding generations to the end of the world; whoever they be of us that are to be reckoned to this body, as members of it, and shall be living and left (*ἡμετέρας*) in the church militant here upon earth, until the time of Christ's coming again in all his glory, we shall not anticipate, much less prevent, the resurrection of the bodies of those saints that will then be sleeping in their graves.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

16 For, at that important day, the Lord Jesus himself will, in his human nature, as visibly descend from heaven, in a cloud of glory, like the antient *Shechina*, as, after his resurrection, he ascended up to heaven with a retinue of angels surrounding him, (*Acts* i. 9, 11. see the paraphrase there,) and he will do this with an awful summons, (*ἐν κραυγῇ*) which shall be uttered with great solemnity, as with a loud voice of the chief of all the angels, the rest attending him, (*Mat.* xv. 31.) and with the exceeding louder voice of the great God our Saviour, Christ himself, as though given forth with the sound of a trumpet, like that which was heard on Mount *Sinai* at the publication of the law \*, and like what was often used for gathering solemn assemblies together, (*Exod.* xix. 16. *Jer.* iv. 5. and *Joel* ii. 15.) and then the bodies of those that died in a state of federal and vital union with Christ, shall be quickened to a glorious immortality, not only before the wicked shall be raised, but even before the saints that may then be alive on earth, shall be brought together with him, (*ver.* 14.)

17 Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

17 Then, after the resurrection of departed believers to eternal life, those of us that are of this holy community, and belong to Christ's mystical body, or his true church, and may be found living, and dwelling with that part of it which shall continue upon earth till that day, shall undergo a refining change, (*1 Cor.* xv. 31.) and be raised up by his almighty power to ascend, as one body with our fellow-members, that shall awake from their sleep in the dust of the earth, to everlasting life, (*Dan.* xii. 2.); and we with them shall be carried up

#### NOTES.

or miserable, whenever such and such events come to pass, whether we may ever live to see them or not.

\* As the trumpet of God seems most immediately to allude to the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, when the Lord or *Jehovah* (which I take, with several learned divines, to mean the Son of God) delivered the law at Mount *Sinai*, (see the note on *Acts* vii. 38.):

to the trump of God, which is not to be understood in a literal sense, may possibly signify the voice of Christ, which he says, "all that are in their graves shall hear, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." (*John* v. 28, 29.)

up by divine rapture in the clouds of glory, in which he will then appear, that all of us together may have a happy meeting with our Lord in the regions of the air, never to part again \* : And being then owned and acquitted by him, and adjudged, as the blessed of his Father, to *inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world*, (Mat. xxv. 34.) we shall thenceforward be, in soul and body to all eternity, with the Lord Jesus himself, to abide in his immediate presence, *where he is, to behold his glory*. (John xvii. 24.)

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

18 Let these considerations therefore, taken from the word of the Lord, comfort your hearts, with respect to the happy condition of your departed Christian-friends, and with respect to the joyful meeting which ye shall have with them in the presence of Christ at his coming; and let these things be the daily subject of your discourse one with another, for your mutual comfort, and the excitation of each other (*παρὰλλήλοις ἀλλήλους*) to a composed, resigned, and cheerful frame of spirit, under all your present trials, and particularly under the loss of such as sleep in Jesus, how near and dear soever they were to you; and under every prospect of your own approaching dissolution.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How concerned should Christians be to increase and abound every day yet more and more, in all holiness of heart and life, according to the will of God, and as may be most pleasing in his sight! And how watchful ought they to be against, and abhorrent of all sensuality, and impurity of every kind, as knowing that God hath called them, not to uncleanness, but unto holiness, and will execute righteous vengeance upon all the workers of iniquity! Whoever neglects, or despises the commandments which his servants deliver by the authority of the Lord Jesus, according to his inspired word, throws contempt, not upon man only, but upon God himself. How amiable is that brotherly love, which true believers are taught of God by his word and Spirit to cherish, and exercise one towards another, together with such a peaceable and quiet temper, as disposes and influences them, not to intrude into affairs that do not belong to them, but to be diligent in attending to the duties of their own stations, that they may get an honourable livelihood, and support the credit of religion among its enemies, and prevent occasions of their reproaching it, as though it encouraged idleness!—As our Christian friends, and we ourselves, must die, either in the ordinary course of nature, or by a violent death, how comfortable is it, and relieving to our sorrows, when any of them are taken from us, to be well satisfied that they sleep in Jesus, and shall rise again to eternal life; and that we shall meet them again, when God will bring them and us to be glorified with him! O reviving thought! that as soon as the dead in Christ shall be raised from their graves, the rest of the saints, that shall be living upon earth at his second glorious coming, shall, by the wonderful operation of divine power, pass under a refining change of their mortal

#### N O T E.

\* It is very probable that Christ's seat of judgment will be *in the air*; since he is so often spoken of as appearing *in the clouds*, and *in the clouds of heaven*, and no place of this earth can scarce be thought capacious e-

nough for the innumerable multitude of the righteous and the wicked, from the beginning to the end of the world, to appear before his throne: and the wicked cannot be supposed to be summoned before it in heaven.

(a) bodies into an immortal frame; shall be caught up, together with risen saints, to meet their Lord in the illustrious cloud, where he will appear in the air; and from thenceforth, all together, as one body, shall, in their whole persons, dwell with him, in his immediate blissful presence for ever!

## C H A P. V.

*The apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to be always ready for the coming of Christ to judgment, which will be with suddenness and surprise, like a thief in the night, 1,—11. Directs them to several particular duties in their relative and personal capacities, 12,—22. And concludes his epistle with prayer, salutations, and a benediction, 23,—28.*

## TEXT.

**B**UT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

## PARAPHRASE.

**B**UT as to the precise time that God has set, and the fittest of all opportunities (*καιρος*) that he designs to take, for Christ's appearing to execute the judgment of the great day, which will be the consummation of your happiness, (*chap. iv. 13,—18.*) ye, my dear brethren in the faith of the gospel, have no occasion, nor would it be to any good purpose, for me to gratify a vain curiosity, by attempting to write to you about a point, that is entirely reserved, as an absolute secret, in the counsels of the divine mind; nor would it be of any advantage to you, were I capable of acquainting you with it.

2 For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

2 For, from what our blessed Lord himself and his apostles have taught, ye yourselves have been already led (*αγεσθε*) into an accurate knowledge of all that is necessary and useful, relating to his final appearance, that ye may be constantly on your watch, and in a proper readiness for it: Ye must needs be well satisfied in your own minds, that the glorious manifestation of Christ, at his coming to judge the whole world, is unalterably fixed in the purpose of God, and foretold in his word, and shall certainly be brought to pass, according thereunto, in its proper season; but that the particular day, or appointed time for it, is as uncertain, with respect to our knowledge of it, and will come as unexpectedly, on a sudden, to all of us, and with as much terror and surprize to the wicked and ungodly, that are unprepared for it\*, as a thief's breaking into a house at midnight can be to the master of it, while he and all his family are asleep, and have no apprehensions of it, or concern

## N O T E.

† In this and the following verses, two elegant and very apposite comparisons are joined together, (says Mr Blackwall in his sacred classics, vol. 2. pag. 209.) the more

forcibly and fully to represent the suddenness of our Saviour's coming to judgment; and the verbs are in the present time, to make the description more affecting and awful.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are

concern about it, to keep them on their watch, and guard against it, (*Mat. xxiv. 42, 43. and Rev. iii. 3.*)

3 For when secure sinners shall flatter themselves, and when, according to their own fond desires, false teachers shall prophesy unto them smooth things, and deceits, saying, *Peace, peace, when there is no peace*, (*Isa. xxx. 10. and Jer. vi. 14.*); at that very time utter destruction of soul and body shall rush in upon them at unawares, and that as certainly and suddenly as the exquisite travailing pains of a woman with child come upon her, when, though she continually carries the cause of them in her own body, she least of all expects them, as being engaged in other affairs, in business or diversions, or in eating, drinking, or sleeping: And as she sooner or later must inevitably undergo the agonizing pains of labour\*; so, whenever this terrible day of the Lord shall come, none of those that are thoughtless about, and unprepared for it, shall by any means be able to fly from, (*ἢ μὴ ἵκνυνται*) or avoid the insupportable miseries that their own unbelief and other sins will bring upon them, (*2 Thess. i. 9.*) there shall then be no place, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves from the fierceness of his righteous indignation, (*Job xxxiv. 22.*)

4 But as for you, my dear Christian brethren, ye may think of this day with joy, and not with grief or distressing fears; as ye are not, like others, under the power of spiritual darkness, to make you sleep secure in sin, faithless and unconcerned about the coming of Christ, and unready to meet him in that awful day, which, tho' it may come as much unexpected and unawares to you, as to them, with regard to the particular time of it; yet it shall not be with a surprize upon you to your ruin, as it will be upon them, in like manner as a thief breaks in, not only unexpectedly, but with dreadful havock, upon them that sleep carelessly, without any thought about it, or being in a fit posture to prevent the mischievous consequences of it.

5 On the contrary, ye who are made wise unto salvation, (as it is meet for me to think of you all according to your holy profession) are effectually called of God

out

#### N O T E.

\* The pains of a woman in travail, which are some of the sharpest agonies of nature, are frequently spoken of as emblems of great distress, as in *Psal. xlviii. 6. Jer. vi. 24. and xliii. 21. and xxii. 23. and L. 43.* It is therefore with great propriety that the apostle represents the exquisite torments of the wicked at the great day by those pains, with

regard to the extreme anguish, as well as the unexpected suddenness of them: And it may carry a further intimation that, as a woman's hour of sorrow is the fruit of her being with child; so the cause of the sinner's miseries lies in himself, whose own iniquity procures them.



are not of the night, nor of darkness.

out of darkness into his marvellous light, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) ye are enlightened with spiritual wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Christ, and of God's way of salvation by him, *that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,* (Ephes. i. 17, 18.); and that ye may be watchful and wakeful, and walk honourably in the light of gospel-truth and holiness with your eyes open, and as becomes persons that are exposed to public view in the midst of broad day-light, (Rom. xiii. 13.); and so may escape the danger of those, that, under the power of sin, error, and unbelief, walk in such ways of darkness, as not to know whether they are going, (John xii. 35.); we, who are thus made light in the Lord, are neither covered with the shadows of judaism, nor with the darkness of heathenism, nor with the natural darkness and blindness of our own minds, as others still are, and we ourselves once were, (Ephes. v. 8.)

6 Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

6 Being therefore brought into this happy state, let us take heed that we never give way to a slothful, careless, and indolent frame of spirit, as others do, who are still in their sins, and to whom our Lord's coming to judgment will be a dreadful surprize to their everlasting confusion: But let it be our great concern, that, suitable to our character, as enlightened by the gospel and Spirit of Christ, we maintain a wakeful temper of mind, to watch over our own hearts and ways, and watch against sin and temptations, and for the coming of our Lord; and that we be modest in our thoughts of ourselves, and moderate in our cares and pleasures, relating to the present world, as those that are expecting his glorious appearance, and are ready and prepared for it.

7 For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.

7 For as they, who give themselves up to sleep, choose the night for it, that their rest may not be disturbed by the noise and business of the day; and they who drink to an excess, and intoxication of the brain, ordinarily do it under the covert of the darkness of the night, that they may not be exposed to shame in the day time; so they that indulge to carnal security, and surfeit themselves with the cares and pleasures of this world, to stupify and drown all thoughts of a judgment to come, till it overtakes them, before they are aware, (Luke xxi. 34.); these are under the power of, and do not care to be disturbed in, the most dangerous security, that proceeds from, and is agreeable to, the darkness of ignorance, error, and sin, that covers them.

8 But

8 But let us who are of the day before, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.

8 But let us, who are surrounded with the light of gospel-truth and grace, which shines in our hearts, be vigilant, (*εγρηγώμενοι*) and moderate in our affections to, and pursuit of the things of this world, like those that look for the coming of our Lord: And as we are in a state of warfare, let us, like soldiers and centinels, that are armed with breast-plates and helmets, to secure the principal seats of the natural life, put on, and daily make use of our Christian armour, especially such parts of it as are necessary for defending our spiritual vitals against all mortal wounds from sin, Satan, and this evil world; that an exercise of faith in Christ, and in God through him, according to his promises, and of love to him and one another, by which faith works, may be like a breast-plate to defend the heart; and that a well-grounded, solid, and satisfying hope of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, may be like a helmet to cover and secure the head in every day of battle, till we come off more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. And we have the greatest encouragement to this hope, and to be diligent in the discharge of all the fore-mentioned duties.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath: but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For it appears by what God in the riches of his grace has already done for and in us, who are *the children of light*, (ver. 5.) that he has not ordained us to destruction, as he righteously has those vessels of wrath, who fit themselves for it by their own iniquities, (see the note on Rom. ix. 23.); but that, having of his own free and sovereign grace *chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love*, (Ephes. i. 4.) he has determined to deliver us, as vessels of mercy, from deserved misery, and to bring us to the enjoyment of a glorious state of immortal bliss, through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

10 Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

10 Who died in our room and stead, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, that, by the merit and efficacy of his death, we who believe in him, whether we be among those that shall be alive upon earth, or sleeping in Jesus at his appearing to judgment, may be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so may live in union and communion, and together with him, in all the dignity and delights of the heavenly state for ever, (*chap. iv. 13, 17.*)

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

11 Therefore in reflection upon, and assured hope of this blessed day, think and talk over these things, as I said before, (*chap. iv. 18.*) to the comfort of your own and one another's souls; and in this way help forward

your

your mutual edification \*, as one body, for the benefit of the whole, that ye may grow up together as a holy temple in the Lord, (Ephes. ii. 21.) with a view to this one thing, namely, your living together with him, which will be the consummation of all your happiness, even as ye have already begun to do.

11 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you :

12 And as they, who minister in sacred things, are the ordinary means and instruments that Christ has appointed, and blesses for edification in light and grace, comfort and holiness, unto complete salvation, we, dear brethren, earnestly intreat you to converse freely with, own and honour, and shew your liberality, love, and respect to his faithful servants, and their holy ministrations, who reside, and take pains in his work, among you, for the good of your souls ; and especially those, who, by Christ's commission, are placed in authority under him to preside and rule over you, not in temporal, but spiritual concerns ; and *that*, not according to laws of their own making, but according to his word, for promoting his kingdom and glory, according to the gifts and graces he has furnished them with ; and who in the discharge of their office, as occasions require, warn you against all sin, error, and danger, and reprove what is amiss among you, and exhort, counsel, and encourage you to persevere in the ways of truth, sobriety, and godliness, till ye shall receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, (1 Pet. i. 9.)

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

13 And we thus recommend them, and their services, to your honourable esteem and affectionate regards, not merely for what is due to them as Christians, but (*ὡς ἐκρίπτεται*) in a superabundant manner, on account of the dignity and importance of the work they are employed in for the glory of God and your spiritual advantage : And as ever ye would not dishonour Christ, nor grieve them, nor his Spirit in them, nor prevent your own profiting by their labours, study the things that make for harmony, peace,\* and friendship with one another, and with them that are set over you in the Lord, that *the God of love and peace may be with you*, (Ephes. iv. 3. and 2 Cor. xiii. 11.)

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, super-

14 Now, dearly beloved brethren, to draw towards a close of this epistle, we earnestly beseech both ministers and people among you, in their respective places, to admonish those of their faults, that do not keep their rank,

#### N O T E.

† As the words (*ἕκαστος τὸν ἑαυτοῦ*) one another constructions, they are attended to in the signify also into one, and admit of various paraphrase.

support the weak,  
be patient to-  
ward all men.

rank, (*ατακτοι*) or are any way disorderly in their walk with the church, or in their families, and conversation in the world: Warn them of their sin and danger, of the dishonour they bring upon their holy profession, and of the pernicious influence of their example; and endeavour, in a spirit of meekness and love, to reclaim them: Do all that in you lyes to encourage and comfort fellow-Christians, that are of a timorous and dejected spirit, ready to give way to melancholy and despairing thoughts, and to faint under their fears and afflictions: Deal tenderly with, and endeavour to strengthen the weak in faith and understanding, and to uphold them from stumbling and falling, who are in danger of it, rather through infirmity, than any evil disposition of mind: And exercise all long-suffering and forbearance, as far as the nature of things permits, and as may be most likely to answer valuable ends, toward persons of all these characters, yea, and towards all men, whether friends or enemies, Christians or not.

15 See that  
none render evil  
for evil unto any  
man: but ever  
follow that which  
is good, both a-  
mong yourselves,  
and to all men.

15 How ill soever others treat you, keep a guard upon your own angry and resenting passions; and let none of you dare to seek private revenge, to be even with, and retaliate mischief upon the head of any one that shall injure you; but, on the contrary, *overcome evil with good*, (Rom. xii. 17, 19, 20, 21.) and be always studying, and pursuing whatsoever is kind, useful, and beneficial, both one towards another, as fellow-Christians and even towards all mankind, as fellow-creatures, *doing good to all, as ye have opportunity, and especially to the household of faith*, (Gal. vi. 10.)

16 Rejoice e-  
vermore.

16 As to *personal* duties, that are to be added to the foregoing which are *relative*, labour after a cheerful frame of spirit, for the credit of religion and your own comfort, that ye may rejoice in the Lord, in what he is in himself, and in what he has done, is doing, and will do for you; and rejoice in hope of his glory at all times, in the day of adversity, as well as of prosperity.

17 Pray with-  
out ceasing.

17 Under a humble sense of your entire dependence upon God, as creatures, and as Christians, of the imperfections of your spiritual state, and the afflictions of various kinds that ye are attended with, or liable to, and of your need of further mercies, of a spiritual and temporal nature, see that ye abound in daily prayer, every morning and evening, (see the note on 2 Tim. i. 3.) and be instant in it at all other times, as there may be special occasions and opportunities for it; and ever maintain a praying frame of spirit for solemn addresses to God, and great frequency of holy ejaculations, to mingle with all other duties of the civil and

and religious life, and to guard you against temptations to sin, and dangers of every kind.

18 In every thing givethanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

18 In reflection upon your being unworthy of the least of all God's mercies, and upon the riches of his free goodness and undeserved grace, in loading you with benefits that over-balance all your afflictions, labour to keep up a thankful frame of heart, and to go into lively exercises of it, in every condition of life, (see *Psal.* xxxiv. 1. and *Phil.* iv. 6.) ; for this is a grateful tribute, which God in a special manner requires of you for his own honour, and takes pleasure in, through Jesus Christ, and has laid you under the highest obligations to, on account of his love to you, and of what he has done for you by the great Redeemer.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

19 As these excellent and important duties cannot be discharged, in a right manner, without divine influence, take heed of neglecting, stifling and extinguishing the gifts, graces and operations of the Holy Spirit, that are compared to fire, (*Mat.* iii. 11.) but be watchful and diligent to fall in with, cherish and improve his gracious illuminations, suggestions, motions and assistances, as well as his extraordinary, inclusive of his ordinary gifts \*, to excite you to, and enable you for every good work, and to warm your hearts with sacred fervour in performing it.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

20 As the Word and Spirit go together, according to God's promise, (*Isa.* lix. 21.) and all the operations of the Spirit are by means of, or according to his word, do not treat the prophecies of the Old or New Testament with contempt, as if there were nothing in them for your instruction and edification; nor ought ye to neglect, or think lightly of the appointed and authorised ministrations of God's word to explain and enforce it, whether by an extraordinary gift or not.

21 Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

21 As false teachers are gone abroad in the world, (1 *John* iv. 1.) do not take any thing ye hear upon trust, or receive it with an implicit faith; but examine, try and

#### N O T E.

\* I can by no means confine *quenching the Spirit* here, and *prophesying* in the next verse, to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as some do; but find myself constrained, by what goes before and follows after, to think that *quenching the Spirit* includes, or rather chiefly relates to his ordinary enlightening, quickning, sanctifying and comforting operations; and that *prophesying*, or *prophecies*, (*προφητιας*) relates either to scripture-prophecies, or to preaching, as it sometimes signifies, whether by inspiration or not, (see the note on *Rom.* xii. 6.) For all the other directions, in this

context, relate to the ordinary graces and duties of the Christian life, that go into the common practice of religion, and not to any extraordinary gifts; and it seems very unnatural, and unlike the close and pertinent way of our apostle's writing, to suppose that things of so different a nature should be chiefly, much more only intended, when introduced in the midst of a series of exhortations to the exercise of ordinary graces and duties, that belong to all Christians of every age, as such.

and prove the truth or falshood of all the doctrines and practices that are preached, (*ver.* 20.) by the standard of the word, (*Isa.* viii. 20.) in a humble dependance on the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, (*ver.* 19.) to enable you to form a right judgment concerning them : And when, upon trial, ye find what is really good and honourable, (*καλον*) in point of truth or duty, indulge no longer a sceptical temper about it; but maintain and abide by it, in the steadfastness of your faith, and practice of your lives, rejecting every thing that is contrary to it.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

22 In this manner, keep at the farthest distance possible from all error and sin of every kind, under what specious appearances soever they be presented unto you ; and even from every thing that you suspect to be false or sinful, or tending to draw yourselves or others into any sin or error.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly : and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

23 And may that God himself, who is reconciled to you by the blood of Christ, and is the author, giver and approver of peace one with another, and in your own consciences, and of all manner of prosperity ; may he thoroughly purge your whole persons from all iniquity, and make you eminently partakers of his holiness † ! And I earnestly beg of him, that all the powers and faculties of your rational and immortal souls ; and the whole frame of your animal spirits, sensitive appetites and natural tempers ; and all the members of your bodies may be cured of every sinful irregularity and disorder, in their propensions and operations, and may be continually kept unreprouvable, (*αμεμπτος*) as to any predominant vice, until, and may be found entirely free from all defects, at the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, *when he will present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,* (Ephes. v. 27.)

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

24 My prayer for this, on your behalf, is with faith and assured hope, that he, who hath effectually called you, by his grace, to his kingdom and glory, (chap. ii. 12.) will also, in faithfulness to his promises, carry on and perfect all that concerns you, in the way and by the means of his own appointment. (See *Phil.* i. 6.)

25 As

#### NOTE.

† Your whole spirit, soul and body, has a manifest reference to the received doctrine of the Pythagorean, Platonic, and Stoic philosophers, who considered man as consisting of three parts; of a rational, and animal or sensitive soul, distinct from one another, and of a body, distinct from both, which seems to be agreeable to the account of the creation of man in Gen. ii. 7. where it is said, that

God formed man, his body, "of the dust of the earth, and breathed into man the breath of life, or lives, (*πνευμα*) and," by means of this union, *man became a living soul*, partaker of a sensitive, as well as of a rational life : And as the natural temper very much depends upon the different texture and motion of the animal spirits, I have included *that* under the sensitive soul.

25 Brethren,  
pray for us.

26 Greet all the  
brethren with an  
holy kiss.

27 I charge  
you, by the Lord,  
that this epistle  
be read unto all  
the holy bre-  
thren.

28 The grace  
of our Lord Jesus  
Christ be with  
you. Amen.

25 As we, Christ's ministering servants, thus affectionately pray for you, we earnestly beg that ye, our Christian-brethren, would, in return, be mindful of us in all your prayers, (which we greatly esteem and need) that God would be with us in our work to assist, own and succeed us, and to perform all things for us, in us, and by us, that we may be faithful in the discharge of our difficult and important trust, and may receive the crown of glory from the chief Shepherd at his appearing. (1 Pet. v. 4.)

26 Let our most affectionate and religious respects be presented to all our Christian brethren; and see that ye give usual testimonies of cordial love one to another, by mutual salutations, in the most sincere, pious, chaste, and friendly manner. (See the note on Rom. xvi. 16.)

27 The contents of this epistle, as well as all the inspired writings, are of so great importance, and of such general use and concernment, to the whole church, that I solemnly enjoin those of you, into whose hands it may come; yea, I adjure you, as by a religious oath, (*ορκίζω υμᾶς*) in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus †, that it be not concealed from any of its members, but be distinctly and plainly read to all, and every one of them, who ought to live and walk in love, as dear brethren, and as a peculiar people zealous of good works, whom Christ has purified to himself, as I charitably believe of them, according to their holy profession.

28 To conclude with a parting prayer for you, May the free favour of our anointed Lord and Saviour, and all its blessed fruits and effects, abound towards every one of you, for your present edification and growth in light and grace, love and peace, comfort and holiness, till all shall be compleated in eternal salvation. So I sincerely desire it may be, and so I trust it will be, in testimony of which, I heartily say, *Amen*.

## REC O L L E C T I O N S

How much more does it concern us to be always ready for Christ's coming to judgment, than to indulge curious inquiries when it shall be! It will be a terrible surprize to some, that vainly promise themselves peace and safety, when certain and sudden destruction will come upon them, ere they are aware. But what a joyful day will it be to true believers! They are not involved in spiritual darkness, like others; but are the children of light, whom God hath not appointed to wrath, but to obtain eternal salvation through a Redeemer: And as he

## N O T E.

† The apostle's solemn "charge" that his "epistle should be read to all the holy brethren," or members of the church, is an evident confutation of the doctrine and practice of popery, in forbidding the common

people to read the scriptures; and 'tis equally condemns their having the scriptures only in an *unknown tongue*, which, in effect, is much the same, as not having them at all.

he has called them by his grace, and is at peace with them through the blood of Christ, he will sanctify them throughout, and faithfully perfect all that concerns them, till the day of Christ, that they may live together with him who died for them. But as this is to be brought about in the use of proper means, How careful should they be to shake off sloth! They should watch and be sober, and live in the daily exercise of faith, love, and hope; and cultivate an holy peace among themselves, to mutual edification and comfort; should deal tenderly and faithfully one with another; and pray for, and pay all due regard to, those that labour among them in the word and doctrine, and are set over them in the Lord, to counsel, caution, and encourage them in their way to heaven: They should take heed of despising, or neglecting their holy ministrations, and of stifling the light and impressions of the Spirit that attend them. And, having tried and proved all points of religion by the word of God, they should hold fast the truth, as it is in Jesus, and be ever followers of that which is good among themselves, and towards all men; should abstain from angry and revengeful passions, and from all appearance of evil; and ever maintain a joyful, prayerful, and thankful frame of spirit, and give all becoming testimonies of cordial love and friendship one towards another. What a privilege is it to have the free use of the scripture, for learning these and every Christian doctrine and duty, that we may be taught to profit by them! May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all! Amen.

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A PRACTICAL  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Second Epistle of the Apostle PAUL  
T O T H E  
T H E S S A L O N I A N S,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the Second EPISTLE to the  
THESSALONIANS.

**T**HIS second Epistle to the *Thessalonians* is generally, and most probably, thought to have been wrote, in less than two years after the former, by the apostle Paul from *Corinth*, where he still continued; and, as seems from *chap. i. 3.* and *ii. 2.* and *iii. 11.* had received some further account of the state of their affairs; and thereupon wrote this Epistle to commend, encourage, and comfort them under their sufferings for the gospel; and to rectify their misconstruction of what he had said in his former Epistle about the coming of Christ,



Christ, as if he meant that his second glorious appearing to judgment were just at hand; as also to correct the disorders of some among them, that were too much inclined to an idle life, and might, possibly, grow more and more negligent of secular affairs from their mistaken notion, as though the end of all things were at hand, and might be tempted to reject the whole gospel, as a forgery, when they should live to see themselves disappointed of the expectation which they had built upon one of its supposed prophecies of so important an event.

The apostle begins with his usual inscription and salutation; and to encourage their patience under tribulations for Christ, expresses his thankfulness to God for their growth in grace, which would be crowned with eternal glory, when Christ shall appear to their joy, and the destruction of his and their enemies, *chap. i.* He then exhorts them to steadfastness of faith in Christ; and undeceives them with respect to their mistaken apprehensions of his speedily coming to judgment, which he tells them would not be, 'till after the days of anti-christian apostacy; from which he blesses God that they should, and prays that they might be preserved to their comfort and establishment, *chap. ii.* And he concludes with desiring their prayers, and with expressions of his confidence that, answerable to his prayers for them, they should be established, and would yield obedience to the apostolic commands in all things; adding exhortations to withdraw themselves from such members of the church as did not act up to the dignity of their Christian character after the example which he had set them, and *that* particularly with respect to industry in their several stations; charging the church to be faithful, prudent, and tender in admonishing disorderly walkers; and closing all with his good wishes and affectionate benediction, with which he usually concluded his Epistles, *chap. iii.*

## C H A P. I.

*The Apostle salutes the church at Thessalonica, ver. 1, 2. Blesses God for the growing state of their love and patience, 3, 4. And encourages them to persevere therein under all their sufferings for Christ, in consideration of his coming at the great day of account, to execute righteous judgment on his and their enemies, and to be glorified in their own complete salvation, which the apostle hoped and prayed for on their behalf, 5,—12.*

## TEXT.

**PAUL**, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:

## PARAPHRASE.

**PAUL**, with *Silas* and *Timothy*, who assisted him in planting the gospel among you, the church at *Thessalonica*, (*Acts xvii. 4, 14.*) which is constituted of believers in God, as the only living and true God, in distinction from all the idols of the heathen, and as our covenant God and Father; and of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only true Messiah, in distinction

2 Grace unto you, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

tion from all pretenders to that character, whom the unbelieving *Jews* vainly expect. We join in sending a second epistle, and in the most affectionate Christian salutations, as we did in the former, (see the note on 1 Cor. i. 1.) cordially wishing and praying, that the divine favour, with all its special manifestations, fruits, and effects, and every kind of prosperity that can be included in the term *peace*, relating to God, yourselves and others, may abound towards all, and every one of you, by the free gift of God our heavenly Father, as the original fountain of it, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only mediator, by and through whom it is communicated, and rendered effectual for your present and eternal happiness.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other abundantly;

3 We, reflecting on what we have further heard of the grace of God toward you, feel ourselves to be sweetly constrained unto continual thankful acknowledgements of it for his glory; and to bless his holy name on your behalf, dear brethren, as it becomes us, and we are bound in duty to do; because your faith, which his Spirit wrought in you, by means of our ministry, (1 Epist. i. 5. and ii. 1.) is carried on, and exceedingly improved, by his continued aid and influence, in its light, strength, and lively exercise; and your brotherly love, as the fruit of this remarkably growing faith is proportionably increasing in its fervor, and all suitable expressions and demonstrations of it, in every one of you towards each other.

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.

4 So eminent and exemplary are these graces in you; and your behaviour under the greatest trials of them is so becoming the gospel, that we think of, and mention you with high esteem, honour and delight, in all the churches of the living God, wherever we come, for your firmness of mind, calm submission and holy resolution, as well as strong and lively faith, which produces them, in bearing up with a truly Christian Spirit, and stedfast adherence, to Christ and the gospel, under all the severe persecutions and afflictions of every kind, that still attend you for his sake, as they did when ye first received the word with joy in the Holy Ghost, (1 Thess. i. 6, 7.)

5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which

5 This carries a plain demonstration (*δεικνυσιν*) of God's having judged right, in permitting you to be exercised with these troubles which turn so much to his glory and your own spiritual benefit; and it is an evident proof that there is a just and impartial judgment to come, which will set all things to rights, that ye may be deemed fit and meet subjects to inherit that heavenly kingdom,

which ye also suffer :

kingdom, which God hath prepared for you from the foundation of the world, (*Mat. xxv. 34.*) ; and it is on account of your professed expectation of this, through Jesus Christ, according to the gospel, that your enemies are so severe upon you ; and by the hope of this ye are animated to suffer all hardships with cheerfulness and patience, without fainting under them, (see the notes on *2 Cor. iv. 17.*) as believing that the issue of all will be to your unspeakable joy, and their insupportable misery ;

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you :

6 For as much as it is suitable to the rectitude of God's nature and will, law and government, who will judge the world in righteousness, and whose judgment is according to truth, to inflict the severest punishment in due time upon them that now cruelly persecute you ; and so to retaliate just indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon them, that now unjustly vex and distress you, (*Rom. ii. 2, 5, 8, 9.*)

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,

7, 8 And it is a righteous thing with God, on Christ's account, and in performance of his covenant with him and his members, to give you (*you*) a release and dismissal, in due time, from all your present tribulations, and an entrance into a state of perfect rest and peace, together, and in company with us, his ministering servants, and your fellow-sufferers for his sake, (*1 Thess. iii. iv.*) ; which he assuredly will do, when the Lord Jesus, who has redeemed us by his precious blood, shall be openly manifested, and every eye shall see him, at his descending from heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, (*Phil. iii. 20.*) with a grand retinue of all his holy angels, who excel in strength, and were created by, and for him, and shall attend to do his will, as his ministers in that day, (*Mat. xiii. 49, 50. and xxiv. 31.*) and he shall be revealed in the most august and tremendous manner, as coming with flames of fire all around him, to burn up the earth, and the wicked that are therein, (*2 Pet. iii. 10.*) and to execute wrath on all those that continue in their sins, strangers to the true knowledge of God, and rebellious against the light of nature, like the *Gentiles* that did not glorify him as God ; and on all those that are disobedient to the gracious calls of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in his gospel, like the unbelieving *Jews*, and all that reject him.

8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord

9 Both these sorts of sinners shall be severely punished, not by an annihilation of their being, but by an eternal loss of all happiness ; by a total banishment from his blissful presence, and from all the glorious effects

Lord, and from the glory of his power;

or his saving power, which will be manifested in the saints, (*ver. 10.*) and by suffering the greatest miseries in soul and body from his own immediate hand, who is every-where present in being and operation, and from terribly glorious impressions of his Almighty power upon them.

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

10 This is what he will certainly do, to the utter confusion and ruin of his and your enemies, at the very time when he will appear to your joy, and will come to be glorified in a faithful performance of all his promises unto the complete salvation of his peculiar people, who are sanctified by faith in him, and to be glorified by them in their exalted praises for it; and shall come to be adored by all true believers with transports of joyful astonishment, and with humble and thankful wonder at his grace, and at the great and glorious things he has done for and in them, which will reflect a glory upon him; and this will be with envious amazement of their enemies to see them, whom they so much despised and oppressed before, so highly favoured and honoured by their great Lord, in the day of judgment; because they will then be found among those that cordially embraced the testimony, that we his servants gave to his person and offices, and to his final appearance, in our preaching the gospel, which will be eminently confirmed, as the truth of God, to their richest advantage in that day.

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;

11 And according to our hope of your escaping all the terrors, and sharing in all the blessedness and glory of that important day, we are continually recommending you in our stated, earnest, and affectionate prayers to the God of all grace, whom we humbly claim as our covenant-God, that he would carry on, and perfect his good work in your souls, to make you meet and fit persons, in his gracious account, to inherit all the blessings of his kingdom of glory, (*ver. 5.*) to which he hath called you by the gospel; and that he would fill up (*πληρουν*) what yet remains to be fulfilled of all the free and sovereign purposes of his kindness, love, and grace toward you, and his eminently good work of faith in you, unto all patient, confirmed and lively exercises, and still further increases of it, and of its fruits of righteousness, till it be finished by the powerful operation of his Spirit in you.

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in

12 That so the person, authority, and doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be highly exalted in your esteem, and in their happy and glorious effects upon you, and may be glorified in heart and life by

in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

by you; and that ye may arrive at the most glorious state of perfect joy and praise, by virtue of your union with him, according to the free favour of our gracious God, who hath appointed you to it, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath purchased it for you, promised it to you, and will bestow it upon you.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How solemn and august will Christ's appearance to judgment be at the last day! How tremendous to sinners! And how transporting to believers! He will then be visibly seen, as coming from heaven with awful majesty, and surrounding hosts of angels; a flame of fire will go before him to devour his enemies; and he will execute the righteous judgment of God in taking dreadful vengeance on those that hiss the light of nature, and rebel against the clearer light of the gospel of Christ, and on all the persecutors of his church and people: They shall be banished his blissful presence, and punished with immediate impressions of his Almighty power upon them to their everlasting destruction. But with what a different aspect, and to what better purposes will he, at the same time, manifest himself to sincere believers, whose hearts are purified by faith! He will come to be glorified and admired in them; and they shall be glorified in and with him, as members in union with him. Happy souls! who are brought cordially to believe the divine testimony that is given in the gospel concerning him, and that shall be confirmed, with a glorious accomplishment of it to themselves in the great day. What thanks are due to God on their behalf! How justly may his servants glory in these objects of his love, and in its powerful effects upon them! And with what patience, faith, and hope, may they themselves endure all tribulations that befall them, in view and prospect of this blessed day, when the righteous God will, according to his promise, and the merit of his Son, make them a rich amends for all their sufferings for him! May grace and peace be multiplied to them from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ! May all the good pleasure of God's goodness, and the work of faith, be fulfilled in them with power, by perfecting all that concerns them, in order to their glorifying the name of Christ in this world, and their being glorified with him in the world to come, according to the freeness and riches of the Father and Son's grace, as revealed in the gospel!

### C H A P. II.

*The apostle cautions the Thessalonians against an erroneous notion, as though the time of Christ's coming to the final judgment were just at hand, 1, 2. Assures them that there would first be a general apostacy from the faith, and a revealing of the antichristian man of sin, whom he describes by his rise, reign, and ruin, and shews the just destruction that would come upon his insatuated subjects, that had pleasure in unrighteousness, 3,—12. But blesses God for the security of the Thessalonians from apostacy, by virtue of their eternal election, and effectual calling, and thereupon repeats his exhortation to steadfastness, and prays for them, 13,—17.*

TEXT.

NOW we beseech you brethren, by the coming

HAVING now, my dear Christian brethren, to encourage and comfort you under all your present tribulations, reminded you of the glorious coming of Christ,

coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

Christ, which will be to your unspeakable joy, and the everlasting destruction of all his and your enemies, (*chap. i. 6,—10.*) I, with whom *Silvanus* and *Timothy* join, (*chap. i. 1.*) proceed to another principal design of this epistle, which is to rectify a mistake, that some have been led into, as though Christ were now suddenly coming to judgment. We therefore earnestly intreat, and solemnly adjure you, by your belief, expectation, and desire of the awful coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to the final judgment of all mankind, at the last day; and by your hopes of being then gathered together with us, and with all his saints, in the general assembly and church of the first-born, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be ever with him in his blissful presence, (*1 Thess. iv. 17.*) † we beseech you to think seriously about an affair of such vast importance.

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

2 That ye may not easily, and so soon after the instructions we have given you, relating to it, be misled into any notions, contrary thereunto, that would disconcert, or stagger your minds, or throw them into perplexity and confusion, by means of any false suggestions that are spread among you, either by mere pretenders to a spirit of prophecy, or by ignorant, or designing misconstructions of what we have delivered by word of mouth, or by writing in our former epistle, (*chap. iv. 15,—18.*) or by appeals to spurious writings, or traditions, that are forged and fathered upon us, as though, in one or other of these ways we had affirmed, or at least given intimations, from which it might be gathered as our opinion, that the day of our blessed Lord's glorious appearing to the final judgment were just now instantly coming on; whereas no such thing was ever said, or designed to be suggested by us; and your belief of it would be of dangerous consequence, since upon your being disappointed of your expectation, as ye certainly would, with respect to the time of his coming, ye might be tempted to disbelieve his ever coming at all; and to conclude against the truth of the whole

#### N O T E.

† That this coming of Christ relates, not to his coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the final judgment, is very evident, because this is the sense in which the apostle all along speaks of his coming in this and his former epistle. See first *Epist.* ii. 19. and iii. 13. and iv. 13,—17. and v. 2, 13. and second *Epist.* i. 6,—10. And as the preposition (*ὡς*) with a genitive case, often signifies concerning or about; and the Ethiopic

version, and Theophilact's manuscript renders it concerning, the paraphrase gives a hint of that sense; though, with the generality of commentators, I prefer the other, which puts (*ὡς*) concerning for (*διὰ*) by, and seems to set the meaning of this passage in the clearest light, and to be most agreeable to the apostle's frequent manner of adjuration in important cases, which he also had used in his first epistle, *Chap. v. 17.*

whole gospel itself, of which this is so essential an article.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

3 Take heed that no man impose upon you, or seduce you into this pernicious notion, by these or any other pretences whatsoever; there being no truth in it: for we now assure you by divine revelation, that the awful day of judgment is at a remoter distance, and will not come, till after there shall be a remarkable and general apostacy from the faith, worship, and holiness of the gospel, and an antichristian-power, consisting of a succession of impious men, shall be made manifest, which for subtilty and strength, in countenancing and propagating the vilest corruption of doctrines and manners, may be fitly styled, by way of eminence, *that man of sin*\*, who will set up himself, and be discovered in the plainest characters, by being at the head of all abominable wickedness, (see the note on *ver. 4.*) under the Christian name; who also may be called *the son of perdition*, as he will cause the destruction of the souls and bodies of multitudes, and as he himself will be destroyed, or go into perdition, and be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, (Rev. xvii. 11. and xix. 20.)

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

4 This man of sin is emphatically the great *antichrist*, who, considering him as arrived at the height of his temporal and ecclesiastical dignity, is an opposer of Christ, in the perfection and glory of all his offices, and a cruel persecutor of his members: he also, according to *Daniel's* prophecy, (*chap. xi. 36.*) magnifies himself above, and assumes sovereign authority over kings and emperors, who, on account of their office, are styled *Gods*, (Psal. lxxxii. 1. 6.) and in the title of the *Roman* emperors, are called *August*, (*asbaras*) as if they were to be worshipped; and he exalts himself above the gods of the heathen, by claiming a greater and more extensive power in heaven, earth, and hell, than ever was ascribed to any one of them; yea, above the true

#### N O T E.

\* "That man of sin, the son of perdition," though mentioned in the singular number, signifies not merely any one particular person; but a succession of men, in like manner as the succession of the kings and high priests of *Israel* were spoken of as though they had been but one person, in describing their characters, and the law concerning them. *Deut. xvii. 14, — 20. Lev. xxi. 10, — 15. Numb. xxxv. 25, 28.* and *Heb. ix. 7.* and this is interpreted to mean any high priest in his day; and the whole order of them together is meant by *the high priest*. The same also may be observed with

respect to "that which with holds and he who now lets, and will let, till it be taken away," *ver. 6, 7.* which, (as many of the ancient fathers understood it, and the event afterwards proved) pointed at the heathen *Roman Empire*, or *Emperors* at the head of it, in a succession of them, though the apostle hints this with great caution, only in a covert way, to avoid giving offence to the Emperor, and provoking his wrath against the Christians, as a seditious sort of people, that fomented notions tending to the destruction of the *Roman Empire*.

true God himself, who is the only object of religious adoration, by dispensing with his laws, and ordering, in direct contradiction to his command, (*Mat. iv. 10.* see the note there) that religious worship should be paid to creatures and images which is due to God alone; and by requiring a more absolute obedience to his own authority, than to the commands of God himself: so that, as the true God formerly resided in the temple of *Jerusalem*, this grand anticrist seats himself, as on his throne, in the church, which is spoken of as *the temple of God*, (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and 2 Cor. vi. 16.) and by exercising supreme authority over it, giving laws to, and receiving divine titles and homage from it, in its apostate state, he makes a vain shew, as if he really were God †.

§ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things!

§ Have ye been so careless as to have forgotten former notices of these things? this seems to be the case with some of you. But cannot ye now recollect, ye certainly might, that I *Paul* myself\*, when personally preaching to, and conversing with you at *Thessalonica*, gave you sufficient intimations, that the day of Christ's coming to judgment is not just at hand; but that, in the course of divine dispensations, there must be first a general

#### N O T E

† All these characters of *the man of sin* are plainly applicable to, and exemplified in popery, inclusive of the hierarchy of *Rome*, with the Pope at the head of it, in successive generations; and fully agree to none that has appeared in the world besides them: for they are monsters of wickedness, that are guilty of, and patronize cruel persecutions, perfidious breaches of faith, and idolatrous worship of saints, angels, and images; and that encourage all manner of iniquity, by pretended pardons, and indulgences, and licencing houses of debauchery; and they, though not professedly, yet really oppose Christ in all his offices; in his *prophetic* office, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; in his *priestly* office, by the doctrine of merit, the sacrifice of the mass, and joining saints and angels, as intercessors with Christ: and in his *kingly* office, by dispensing with his laws, and setting up the Pope, as the supreme head of the church. And some of their Popes have treated kings and emperors with insolent contempt, as their vassals, to be deposed, or enthroned, at their pleasure; have excommunicated them, and absolved their subjects from allegiance to them: others have trod on the necks of emperors, kick'd off their crowns with their feet, and set them on with their feet again, and obliged them to hold

the Pope's stirrup, when he alighted from, or mounted his horse. These haughty ecclesiastical tyrants have set themselves in the place of God, by assuming authority over the souls and consciences of men, and admitting of blasphemous adorations, under the titles of a "God on earth, and the Lord God the Pope;" and they have exalted themselves even above God himself, by not only repealing his laws, but making the whole authority of his word to depend on the authority of the church. These, and such like things, are notorious in the church of *Rome*; and the description here given of her, stands in good agreement with the representation that is made of the *Romish* anti-christian power in the *Revelation*, under the figures of "Mystery, Babylon, the great whore that sits on many waters, the beast" and the false prophet."

\* The apostle here refers to what he had said to the *Thessalonians* in his personal ministry and conversation, in which it is reasonably supposed, that he had delivered more things, relating to those points, to which he here appeals, than are to be found, or were proper to be wrote, in his first epistle to them: accordingly he speaks, *ver. 15.* of the *traditions* they had received by word, as well as by his epistle. (See the note there.)



general defection from the faith, and the rise of the antichristian man of sin?

6 And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

6 And if ye duly reflect upon what I have told you by word of mouth, and have now added in this Epistle, ye may easily gather what it is that at present restrains and hinders the complete revelation of the man of sin, as the head of the great apostacy: it may well be supposed in the very nature of things, though dangerous to speak it out, (see the note on *ver.* 3.) that it is the heathen *Roman* empire under one political head, according to the form in which it now subsists. This must be taken away to make room for the introduction of the head of the apostacy, that he may be manifested in the height of his power and authority, pomp and grandeur, in his proper season, according to the appointed time of God for it.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

7 For the great defection, which may justly be called *the mystery of iniquity*, or of *that wicked one*, (*ver.* 8.) on account of the secrecy and subtilty of its spreading, and the unsearchable depth of sin and error that is wrapt up in it, and will hereafter more plainly and openly shew itself, and begins already to diffuse its malignant influence in pride and worldly-mindedness, will-worship, and worshipping of angels, and in corrupting the pure doctrine of justification, as though it were to be by the works of the law; this would quickly appear in all its power and wide extent, were it not that the imperial Pagan government, which hitherto prevents it, will continue so to do, till this obstacle be removed.

8 And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

8 And then, through the growing ambition and luxury of ecclesiastics, under the protection and indulgence of Christian emperors, and by means of the division of the empire itself into ten kingdoms, which will give their power to the beast, (*Rev.* xvii. 12, 13. see the note there) that wicked one will mount the throne, like a lawless person, (*anarch*) who will dispense with, and exalt his authority above, all laws human and divine, and be subject to no law himself: But be it known, for the comfort of the true church, that in the divinely appointed time, he, with all his hierarchy, authority, and grandeur, shall certainly sink and fall; whom the Lord Jesus Christ will begin to blast by the preaching of the gospel in its purity and power, and by spiriting up a set of brave reformers to oppose, and protest against his supremacy, and all his corruptions in doctrine and worship; and he will afterward more eminently slay him, and all his adherents, as with a sword, by the judicial sentence that will proceed from his mouth, and be ex-

ecuted by his command, and by his word and Spirit, when he shall set up his glorious kingdom of truth, righteousness, joy, and peace in the earth; and finally, by his coming to judge the world, and take vengeance on all his enemies in their utter destruction at the last day: In these various ways it may be said, in the language of antient prophecy, that *he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the earth,* (Isa. xi. 4.)

9 Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,

9 The manner of this wicked one's introducing and supporting his tyranny and errors, which shall at length be destroyed, will be in imitation of *the father of lies, who was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,* (John viii. 44.) and under his influence, according to the energy of his operation, (*ἐνεργῶν*) who works effectually (*ἐκτελεστικῶς*) in the children of disobedience: (Ephes. ii. 2.) And this wicked one will exert himself, for upholding and promoting his abominable empire, with all his might, under a pretence of power from God for it; and with sham pretences to miracles, and to wonderful works of a supernatural kind, like what our Lord himself performed, (see the note on Acts ii. 22.) but which, in this pretender, are all a cheat to impose upon, and deceive the nations of the earth.

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

10 And, at the instigation of the diabolical spirit, the apostacy will be carried on, under its papal head, with all subtle and tricking arts, managed by the most unrighteous methods to delude those that comply with them; to their own utter perdition; because thro' the carnality and corruption of their own hearts, and the malignant influence of Satan, which they readily yielded themselves up to, they did not cordially receive Christ in the whole of his character, who is the Truth, (John xiv. 6.) nor would embrace the truth and purity of the gospel concerning him, with approbation, that they might obtain salvation according to, and by means of that revelation, which shows the only way to eternal life through him.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

11 And therefore, as they did not like to retain the knowledge of the truth, God in his righteous judgment for the punishment of their iniquity in its own kind, will deliver them up to the dreadful efficacy of error, (*ἐνταῦθα παραταξέτω*) as the chosen way of their own wicked inclinations, and to a judicial hardness of heart, and the power of *the god of this world who blinds their minds,* (see the note on Rom. ix. 18.) that they might give their free assent and consent to delusive forgeries  
superstitious

superstitions and idolatry, fabulous legends, and monstrous doctrines and practices, that have no truth in them; but are all a heap of falshood and lying vanities;

11 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

12 They shall be justly left to the power of this foolish and perverse disposition of their own evil hearts; that according to their deserts, all of them (*οἱ ἄποστολοι*) might be judged and condemned, and righteously punished with the most awful destruction, who misbelieved and rejected Christ, and the truth of the gospel; but, on the contrary, were exceeding fond of, and took delight in all wicked designs, words and deeds, frauds and persecutions, as what are most agreeable to their own corrupt taste.

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, thro' sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:

13 But as to you, our dear Christian brethren, whom we think of with pleasure, as those whom the Lord himself peculiarly loves, and will preserve from this dreadful apostacy, We have this to say for your comfort, that *in every remembrance of you*, (Phil. i. 3.) we cannot but look upon ourselves as bound in duty and affection to bless God heartily on your behalf; because we are well satisfied, by what we saw of the powerful efficacy of the gospel upon you, when ye first received it, (1 *Thess.* i. 2,—5. see the notes there) and by what we have since heard of its happy and holy fruits, as they continue still further to appear in you, (*chap.* i. 3, 4.) that God, of his own mere grace, has from the beginning of the world, yea, from all eternity \*, made a special choice of you to complete salvation by Jesus Christ, (1 *Thess.* v. 9) as the final happiness which he designed to bring you to, through the renovation of your whole souls in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after the image of God, which is wrought in you by the Holy Spirit, *without which no man shall see the Lord*, (Heb. xii. 14.) and through a fiducial trust in

# N O T E.

\* By *from the beginning* some would understand from the beginning of the gospel's being preached to and received by them: but as, in the next verse, the apostle speaks of their being called by the gospel as a distinct thing, in consequence of God's having chosen them from the beginning, according to what he had said, 1 *Epist.* i. 4. 5. of "knowing their election of God; because the gospel came to them, not in word only, but in power, &c." (see the note there) and as the phrase *from the beginning* (*αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου*) signifies the beginning of time, 1 *John* iii. 8. and *from the beginning* is of the same import with *from everlasting*, Prov. viii. 23. and our apostle speaks of "God's

"having chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love," (Eph. i. 4.) "All this shew, that his calling the *Thessalonians*, by the gospel, is to be distinguished from his having chosen them; and that his having chosen them *from the beginning* is to be understood of his having done it *from eternity*, in pursuance of which he called them with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began," (1 *Tim.* i. 9, 10.) Vide *Wylf. Oecon. Eccl. lib. iii. cap. 4. §. 21. &c.*

in Christ, and faithful adherence to him, according to the truth of the gospel-revelation of him, as God's appointed way and means of bringing you safe to glory; the end and means being inseparably connected in his decree, and in the execution of it.

13 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

14 To which salvation, as to be brought about in this way, he has now, as the fruit of electing love effectually called you, (*ver. 13. and Rom. viii. 30.* see the note there) by our preaching the gospel, not a gospel which we are the authors of, but a dispensation of which is committed to us, and which is faithfully ministered by us, in opposition to all other pretended gospels, (*1 Cor. ix. 17. and Gal. i. 8.*) that ye might be thereby brought, through the attending operation of the Spirit, unto a title and claim to, and, at length, the full enjoyment of that immortal state of bliss and glory, which our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased, prepared and taken possession of, as your Head and Forerunner for you, and hath promised, and at the last day will adjudge and bring you to, that ye may behold his glory, and be made like him, and completely happy with him, in soul and body for ever.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

15 In consideration therefore of what God has thus graciously designed and done for you, dear brethren, and of the promised assistances which from thence ye may further well expect and depend upon, We earnestly beseech you to stand fast in the faith, comfort and hope, doctrine, holiness, and profession of the gospel; and stedfastly to maintain the important points of truth and duty †, which ye have been instructed in by us, the servants of Christ, (*chap. i. 1. and 1 Thess. i. 1.*) whether by word of mouth, while we were with you; or by this, and our former epistle, which contain an important part of the faith, that is *delivered to the saints*, (*Jude, ver. 3.*) as the only standard of doctrines, worship, and obedience.

16 Now

#### N O T E.

† This *holding the traditions* relates only to such doctrines as the apostle and his fellow-labourers had delivered to them, pertaining to the only rule of faith, worship, and obedience, by their personal preaching and conversation, or by the writing of this, and the former epistle; and therefore it cannot give the least countenance to the *oral traditions* of the Papists, which they pretend have been handed down through many hundreds of years; but are really stuff'd with such ridiculous and incredible stories as neither agree with the scripture nor with

common sense: and as, by all these traditions, they cannot point out so much as one of the particulars that were delivered to the *Thessalonians* by word of mouth from the apostle any farther than they are recorded in the New Testament, or may be gathered from thence, it is time enough for us to attend to *their traditions*, when they can produce testimonies to them as authentic, and well-known to us, as these were to the *Thessalonians*; or can prove them by the word of God. (See the note on *1 Cor. xi. 2.*)

15 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope thro' grace,

16 Now, upon the great encouragement we have to hope well concerning you, as the chosen and called of God. (*ver.* 13, 14.) We earnestly pray, with comfortable assurance of being heard, that our Lord Jesus Christ himself, as the divine Saviour, who has redeemed us by his blood, and purchased eternal glory for us, and will be our judge at the last day to confer it upon us\*; and that God the Father, even our covenant-God the Father in him, who, we trust, has loved both you and us with an everlasting love, and has by manifestations of it revived our souls with his consolations, which are everlasting in their foundation, matter, tendencies and final issues, though not always or alike sensibly enjoy'd, while we are in this present state of imperfection; and who hath given us freely by his grace the best of all hope, even a good hope of eternal life, which is solid, scriptural, and well-grounded, and shall never make us ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us, (*Rom.* v. 5.)

17 Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.

17 We, I say, earnestly, and with humble confidence beg, that these adorable persons in the Godhead would, with concurring agency, according to the respective parts which they have voluntarily undertaken in the oeconomy of salvation, fill your souls, yet more and more, with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, (*Rom.* xv. 13.) and may be comforted under all troubles, fears, and dangers; and that they would strengthen and fortify you immoveably, unto all perseverance in every doctrine of the gospel, which brings good tidings of great joy; as also in every sort of sound speech, which cannot be condemned; and in every good work of righteousness, with regard to God, yourselves, and one another.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How exceeding dangerous is it to be misled into mistaken expectations of divine appearances, like that of Christ's immediately coming to judgment, lest, thro' disappointment therein, we should be tempted to disbelieve the whole gospel, which we thought encouraged them! It is no wonder that the promises of Christ's second appearing are not yet fulfilled, since we are assured by the spirit of prophecy, that the general apostacy, under the man of sin, or papal power, which assumes the prerogatives of God, was first to rise and reign, till it shall be destroyed by the spirit of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and since this power could not be set up till the government of the Roman Cæsars should be dissolved.

#### N O T E.

\* Our Lord Jesus Christ is here considered as the object of religious worship, and the author of the blessings that are, implicitly at least, prayed for from him, in the same manner equally, and together with the Father, which supposes his proper divinity, according to the established and unchange-

able law of worship, as recited by himself, *Matth.* iv. 10. and his being mentioned in this manner, even before the Father, takes off all pretences of his inferiority, either in Deity or worship, on account of the Father's being at other times mentioned before him.

But alas ! how dreadful must their condemnation and destruction be, whom God in his righteous judgment gives up to such a spirit of delusion as fondly to believe, and voluntarily comply with, all the idolatry, superstition, tyranny, and corruptions of popery, which are propagated by satanical forgeries, and vain pretences to miraculous powers and signs, that, in reality, are no other than lying wonders ! God righteously suffers the admirers of these to be deceived by them ; because they did not like to embrace the truth of the gospel concerning Christ, as the only Mediator, that they might be saved. But O how happy is the state of those that are secured from these damning errors, by God's having, in his free love, chosen them from eternity to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, which stand inseparably connected in the purpose of God, and in the execution of it, as the way and means of bringing about this glorious end ! In order hereunto he effectually calls them, unto the obtaining of the immortal life, which Christ hath brought to light by the gospel, and will advance them to, at the last day. With what encouraging hope, and confidence of a blessed issue, upon these grounds, may believers receive, and stedfastly adhere to, what is delivered by inspired writers ; and be earnest in prayer, that their Lord and Saviour, and their God and Father in him, would give them such consolation, as is of an everlasting nature, and such good hope, through grace, as shall never disappoint them ; but shall be to their abundant joy, and establishment in every good doctrine, way, and work, till they arrive at heavenly glory !

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle desires prayer for himself and his fellow-labourers ; expresses his confidence in the Thessalonians, and prays for them, 1,—5. Charges them to withdraw from disorderly walkers, and particularly from those that were lazy, and busy-bodies, contrary to his example and command, 6,—15. And concludes with a prayer for them, and with a salutation and benediction, 16,—18.*

## TEXT.

Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with you :

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW, my dear brethren in Christ, to draw towards a close of this epistle, Let me earnestly intreat your fervent prayers for me, and my fellow-labourers, such as *Silvanus* and *Timothy*, who join with me in writing to you, (*chap. i. 3.*) that we may be directed, assisted, and owned in our great and difficult work, for which we are insufficient of ourselves ; and that the gospel of salvation, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the author and principal subject, may run with speed and success, (*εὐχρη*) and be spread and propagated in its purity and power all around, far and wide, and not hindered in its progress ; but may bear down all opposition before it, and be received with honour and esteem, as of divine authority, and a glorious scheme of salvation ; and may produce glorious effects in the conversion, edification, and holy conversation of multitudes, wherever it is preached, even as it has among you. (*See 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. i. 5, 6.*)

2 And we in a special manner beg your prayers, that we may be kept, or rescued out of the hands of unbelieving Jewish zealots, and delivered from perils among false brethren, (*2 Cor. xi. 26.*) who are (*αἰσχροὶ*) insolently perverse and absurd in their reasonings, and prejudices against us, and are maliciously wicked in their principles

a And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men : for all men have not faith.

principles and practices, endeavouring to stop our mouths, and throw us into prisons, and would persecute us unto death: Many of these we meet with wherever we go, as we did at *Thessalonica*: (Acts xvii. 5. and 1 *Thess.* ii. 15, 16, 18.) For it is undeniable evident from hence, that, even among professors of religion and Christianity itself, all of them do not cordially embrace Christ, according to the truth of the gospel, by that faith, which works by love, and purifies the heart.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.

3 But though false and hypocritical pretenders, *who receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved*, (chap. ii. 10.) be left of God to themselves, and turn violent enemies to us and you for the gospel's sake; yet ye ought not to be discouraged upon this account: For *as ye have received the word of God, not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe*, (1 *Thess.* ii. 13.) so ye may assuredly depend upon his faithfulness, in making good his covenant-promise of persevering grace, (*Jer.* xxxii. 40.) that he will confirm, settle, and strengthen you in the doctrine and grace of faith, and in your holy profession of it, and practice of godliness according to it; and will so far preserve and secure you from the power of tribulation, sin, and Satan, and all his wicked instruments, as that none of them shall prevail to your final destruction.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

4 And as your preservation is to be in a way of holy obedience; so we have an entire trust and joyful confidence in the Lord Jesus concerning you, as believers in him, and vitally united to him, that, through his grace, ye not only hitherto have been, and still are, but shall perseveringly continue to be obedient in all things to those commandments which we have delivered, and may further deliver to you, in his name, and by his authority, (*ver.* 6.)

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

5 And, according to this our hope in Christ concerning you, we earnestly pray, that the Lord the Spirit \* would, by his light and influence, set to rights all the irregular motions of your hearts, and carry them more and more in a straight course, as by a direct line, (*κατευθυνε*) into a clear and experimental acquaintance with the love of God to you, and into the liveliest exercises

#### N O T E.

\* The Lord here applied to seems to be best understood of the Lord the Spirit, (*Κυριος πνευματος*) as 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. may properly be rendered: for the Father and Son are spoken of as persons distinct from this Lord, who directs the heart into the love of

God the Father, and the patient waiting for Christ, or patience of Christ: (*υπομονη του Χριστου*) and the things, here pray'd for, are represented in scripture, as the special and immediate work of the Holy Ghost. See *Rom.* v. 5. and *Gal.* v. 15, 22.

ercises of your love to him, under a sense of his having first loved you, (1 *John* iv. 19.) as also into affecting and endearing reflections upon, and imitation of, the wonderful patience with which Christ endured all his sufferings for your sake; and into a patient continuance in well-doing, (Rom. ii. 7.) under all your troubles and dangers for his sake, and a patient expectation of his second coming, (1 *Thess.* i. 10.) which will ere long put an end to all your trials, and make you a rich and everlasting amends for them.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

6 Now, dear brethren in the Lord, having expressed our good opinion and hopes concerning you, as a spiritual and holy body, and the sincere desire of our souls for you all, We take this opportunity to add, that, as we hear some of your number continue to be idle, and busy-bodies, (*ver.* 11.) notwithstanding the solemn injunctions we had given to the contrary, (1 *Thess.* iv. 11, 12.) so we, in reflection hereupon, think it high time to enjoin you, as a church, by the authority, and for the glory of Christ, our common Lord and Saviour, from whom we have received our commission and instructions, that ye remove from your holy communion, and avoid all unnecessary familiarity and conversation with every brother, or member of your religious society, of what rank or station soever, that lives irregularly, going into, and persisting in such a course of laziness, and intermeddling with other people's affairs, as is very injurious to public and family-peace, and dishonourable to the Christian character; and no way agreeable to the admonitions which we have delivered, whether by word of mouth, or in our former epistle, (*chap.* ii. 15. see the note there) and exemplified in our own behaviour when we were present with you.

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you:

7 For by these means, ye yourselves very well know the manner in which ye ought to imitate us, and walk answerable to our directions, as ye cheerfully did at your conversion, (1 *Thess.* i. 6.) For we can appeal, not only to the Lord himself, but even to your own consciences, as our witnesses, how holily, justly, and unblameably, we all along behaved ourselves among you, (1 *Thess.* ii. 10.) and how careful we were, not to live at a slothful disorderly rate, contrary to the rule of the word which we laid before you when we were at *Thessalonica*.

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travel

8 No, nor did we partake of any one's food, or table with him, at free-cost, without paying for it; but earned our bread before we eat it, by diligent and wearisome labour with our own hands, taking abundance of



night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you :

of pains, and undergoing great fatigues early and late, by day and night ; sometimes in preaching the gospel, as we had opportunity for it, and at others, in working, as occasions required, at handicraft trades in several places, (*Acts* xviii. 3. and xx. 34.) and particularly among you, (*1 Thess.* ii. 9. see the note on *1 Cor.* ix. 1.) that we might provide for ourselves, and not be a burden to any of you, as some of a covetous temper, or narrow circumstances, might have thought us, had we been maintained at their expence.

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.

9 I remind you of this, not as though we had not a just right by virtue of our office, according to the reason of things, and the authority of Christ, to insist upon, and even demand a covenant and comfortable maintenance, in return for our ministerial labours, as I have asserted and proved at large to others, (*1 Cor.* ix. 4,—14) and now mention to you ; but we, of our own accord, freely waved all claims of this nature, and worked with our own hands for a livelihood, to take off prejudices against us, as though we were mercenary creatures, and to propagate the gospel the more successfully ; and particularly to set you a good example, and (*τύπον ἵδεντες ὑμῶν*) give you a pattern of industry in your several callings, that ye might be excited, and even constrained to imitate us therein, as well as to follow our precepts relating to it.

10 For even, when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

10 For, having observed appearances of a lazy temper in some, even when we were among you, we strictly commanded you all in general, that if any one of your needy Christian-brotherhood, who is able to work for his living, would not take due pains to provide for himself and his family, if he has one, his indolence and sloth should not be indulged by affording him a maintenance out of the charity of the church, which ought to be applied to the relief and comfort of such of their poor, as through sickness or age, or decay of nature, or any other means, are incapable of doing any thing for their own supply. And ye need not wonder, that we, now again, so strenuously urge this point upon you.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies.

11 For we have been credibly informed, after all that has been said and wrote about it, that there are some idle members of the church, who walk irregularly, in direct contradiction, not only to our express injunctions, and the general rule of Christianity, which establishes all the duties of the civil life ; but even to the moral law itself, (*Exod.* xx. 11.) and to the order of all political and religious societies, and of the crea-

tion, and the present condition of man, who was formed for activity and business in his original state, and was doom'd to *eat his bread in the sweat of his brow*, after the fall: (*Gen. ii. 15. and iii. 19.*) These, going out of their rank, (*ατακτοι*) like loose soldiers, do not care to be employed in their proper callings, or in any useful services at all; but, as is common with such sort of people, they waste their time in gadding abroad, and sauntering about, and curiously prying, and officiously thrusting themselves into, and making their idle remarks upon other people's matters which they have no call to meddle with; but which they busy themselves about, to the great disturbance of particular persons, families, and neighbours, and the creating of jealousies, misunderstandings, and quarrels between friends, and setting them at variance by their tattling and tale-bearing humour, which makes them perfect incendiaries, and the nuisance and pest of all company, wherever they come.

11 Now them that are such we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

12 Now, whosoever they be, that are of this slothful and pernicious disposition and behaviour, we again solemnly charge them by divine authority; and earnestly intreat them by the endearing love of Christ, our great Lord and Master, and for his sake, as ever they would avoid his displeasure, and honour their profession of his name, that, according to our former exhortation, (*1 Theff. iv. 11.* see the note there) they would study to be quiet, and do their own business, with a meek and peaceable frame of spirit, and set themselves diligently to work with their own hands, in their respective stations; and so, by the blessing of God on their honest labour, may provide such food for themselves and theirs, as they have duly earned, and bought with their own money, that they may be beholden to no one's charity for their subsistence; and that, instead of being burdensome to others, they may *have to give to him that needs.* (*Ephes. iv. 28.*)

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

13 But as for those of you, dear brethren, who to the honour of your Christian character, have minded your own business, and not officiously meddled with other people's affairs, we beseech you to persist unweariedly, and without reluctance, in a diligent discharge of the civil, as well as religious duties of your respective stations; and particularly in doing good, with all cheerfulness and liberality, to the industrious, and yet necessitous poor among you, (*Gal. vi. 9, 10.*) tho' ye ought to withhold your charity from such, as are able, but not willing, to work for their own livelihood ver. 10.

14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

14 And if there still be any slothful person of your community, who pays no regard to, nor is reformed by the commandments and exhortations, that we have delivered by Christ's authority, as before, so in this epistle, relating to such, (*ver. 6, 10, 12.*) It is your duty, as a church, to set a brand of infamy upon him, by casting him out, as an unworthy member; and not to countenance him afterwards, by an intimacy of friendship, or unnecessary familiarity in conversation with him, (*ἡ συνουσία*) to the end that, by your shy and cool carriage toward him, he may turn inwards, and blush and be ashamed, in reflection on his sin; and, through divine grace, may be brought to repent of it, and to loath and abhor himself for it, with full purpose of heart to depart from it.

15 Yet count him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

15 But, in order to your attaining this great and good end of excommunication, Take heed of treating him before-hand with austerity and roughness, as if ye aimed at his ruin in temporal or spiritual concerns, and not merely at *the destruction of the flesh, that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 5.) Nor ought ye immediately to look upon him, as an implacable and utterly incorrigible enemy to God and godliness, and to Christ and the gospel; but should deal tenderly, as well as faithfully and plainly with him as a brother, in setting the evil of his ways before him, and passing the awful censure, if necessary, upon him, and in giving him seasonable admonitions, as opportunities offer, considering the relation that he either bears, or has bore to you, in hopes that, by the blessing of God on such attempts, he may be reclaimed, and restored to his former place in the church.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord be with you all.

16 Now may the Lord Jesus himself, our only peacemaker with God, and the author, purchaser, and giver of all manner of peace and happiness, make you prosperous in all grace and holiness, and fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may have peace in your own souls, and one with another, and may be a harmonious and flourishing church, at all times, and by all manner of means, that are suited, by divine appointment, to promote it! and that the means, used for this purpose, may be effectual, we earnestly beg that this blessed Lord, who commands and loves peace, and delights in the prosperity of his servants, would afford all and every one of you his special presence, in a way of providence and grace, to protect and guide, assist, comfort, and perfect all that concerns you, in whatsoever relates to you severally, and altogether as a church!

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

17 To conclude with the salutation, which I *Paul* write with my own hand, as a sure mark to distinguish my Epistles from such as may be forged under my name; and, as pretended to come from me, may deceive and trouble the church, (*chap. ii. 2.*) whenever any of my letters are wrote by an *amanuensis*, as dictated by me, I always at the close add, in my own hand-writing, the following words, or to that effect, (see the note on *Rom. xvi. 22.*)

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

18 May the free love and favour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, inclusive of all its special manifestations, fruits and effects, continually abound to all and every one of you! in testimony of the sincerity of my desire and pleasing hopes hereof, I heartily say, *Amen.*

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How earnestly ought we to pray for the success of the glorious gospel, and for the preservation and liberty of Christ's servants, that their preaching it may not be obstructed by the violence of unbelieving, perverse and wicked men! And what a pleasure is it when they, to whom the care of churches is committed, have a satisfaction in their own minds, that the Lord will establish them in the faith, hope, and holiness of the gospel; and will engage their hearts to do his commandments, as delivered to them in his name! But, alas! How grievous is it to find, that any church-members are disorderly walkers, lazy in their own proper affairs, and mischievous busy-bodies in other people's matters to the scandal of the Christian name! The churches, to which persons of these characters belong, ought in case they cannot be reclaimed, to withdraw from them, and pass such a censure as may be a mark of disgrace upon them, and then shun all unnecessary familiarities of conversing with them, to make them ashamed of the evil of their doings, that are directly contrary to the precepts and example of the holy apostles; and yet they should be treated, as far as the nature of things will bear, in a brotherly way, to bring them to repentance. How unreasonable is it that idle and disorderly walkers should live upon the charity of others! But how cheerfully and generously should the industrious and helpless poor be relieved, according to their wants! May all the churches of Christ have peace among themselves, and prosperity of every kind, from the Lord Jesus, and salute one another with the sincerest Christian affection! May their hearts be directed into the love of God, and a patient waiting, under their various tribulations, for Christ's second coming to put an end to them! And may his grace be ever with them all! *Amen.*

A PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
First Epistle of the Apostle PAUL  
TO  
TIMOTHY,  
In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the First EPISTLE to TIMOTHY.

**T**IMOTHY was an excellent youth, whose father was a *Greek*, and his mother a pious *Jewess*, (Acts xvi. 1, 3.) who had taken a religious and exemplary care to educate him in the knowledge of the Old Testament-Scriptures from his childhood up; (2 Tim. i. 5. and iii. 15.) and, Providence casting him under the ministry of the apostle *Paul*, this young man, through the attending power of the Holy Ghost, was converted to the faith of Christ, as seems to be intimated chap. i. 2. (see the note there); and was so enriched with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that the apostle had a great affection for him, and soon turned his thoughts toward him for an assistant in the work of the ministry: And that the *Jews*, to whom the apostle first preached, might not have the least exception against this his associate, as the son of a *Gentile* by the father's side, he ordered him to be circumcised, which he had not been in the days of his infancy, but now consented to be: and then took him for his companion under the character of an evangelist, an office next to that of the apostleship, in planting and watering the churches.

Though *Paul* had, doubtless, taken much pains with this young evangelist in private conversation, to fit him for a due discharge of his office, hints of which may be gathered from chap. i. 3. and 2. Epist. i. 13. and iii. 10,—14.; yet to fix things more upon his mind, and give him an opportunity of having recourse to them afterwards, and of communicating them to others, as there might be occasion, either at *Ephesus*, where it is most generally supposed *Timothy* then was, or wherever he might go to fulfil his itinerant work; as also to leave di-

vine directions in writing for the use of the church and its ministers in all succeeding ages, he sent him this excellent pastoral letter, which contains a great variety of important sentiments for their regulation; and is supposed by some to have been written about the year of our Lord fifty-five, and by others fifty-eight: And about nine or ten years afterwards, as some think, he followed it with the *Second Epistle*, which still more immediately and chiefly related to *Timothy* himself, and to his own *personal* ministry and conduct.

The time when, the place from which, and the person by whom, this epistle was sent, are indeed variously conjectured by learned enquirers into antiquity, while they all agree in its divine authority, and its being written by the apostle *Paul*.

This sacred writer, after his usual declaration of his apostolic character, and affectionate salutation of *Timothy*, lays before him his duty of guarding against those judaizing teachers at *Ephesus*, or elsewhere, that taught any thing contrary to the sound doctrine, which he himself had delivered, according to the trust that Christ had committed to him. (*Chap. i.*) And as they adhered to synagogue-worship, and set themselves in opposition to the legality of the power of *Gentile* princes and treated it with contempt, as though they had no right of dominion over them, he enjoins the offering up of prayers in all places, without distinction, for kings, and all that were in civil-authority, and for subjects of all characters, whether they were *Jews* or *Heathens*; and then goes on to direct the behaviour of women, among whom it seems there were great indecencies, or extravagancies of dress, and an assuming management in religious assemblies. (*Chap. ii.*) Then he proceeds to a description of the proper qualifications of ordinary bishops or pastors, and of deacons and their wives, with intimations of the course *Timothy* ought to take, as to his own deportment in the church, with regard to such persons, and the whole of his own office, considering the vast importance of that doctrine which he was to preach: (*Chap. iii.*) From thence he takes occasion, to add fore-warnings of seducers, that would arise and pervert many, and would issue in a grand apostacy; ordering him to give such notices of them as might fortify the church of Christ against them, and to exercise himself in such exemplary godliness, and attend so intirely to his ministerial work, and to the improvement of his gifts in preaching the true doctrine of Christ, in such a serious, judicious, diligent, grave and faithful manner, as might raise his youth above contempt, and, through divine grace, might be rendered effectual to the final salvation of his own and his hearers souls. (*Chap. iv.*) Thereupon he directs his conduct towards all persons whether men or women, of every age and station in the church: and solemnly charges him, as in the presence of Christ, to acquit himself with the utmost prudence, caution, and impartiality toward them, in consistence with a due care of his own infirm state of health, and suitable to the circumstances of the people he might have to do with. (*Chap. v.*) And he closes with advice, relating to the duties of servants, and the perverse tendency of any contrary doctrine of corrupt

corrupt and worldly minded men, who being strangers to the power of godliness, and not contented with a moderate share of the conveniences of this life, run themselves into sin and ruin, through their covetous desires: and in opposition to these, he charges *Timothy* to act up to the dignity of his sacred trust and character, as in the sight and presence of God, and as he would answer it in the great day of Christ; and remonstrates against an abuse of the riches of this world, and against the false principles of philosophy, that are subversive of the faith of the gospel; concluding all with a benediction, like himself, saying, Grace be with thee. *Amen.* (Chap. vi.)

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle asserts his office as of divine authority; salutes Timothy; and reminds him of the charge he had given him at Ephesus, 1,—4. Of his end therein, and of the design of the Mosaic law, 5,—11. Of his own conversion, and call to the apostleship, 12,—17. and of Timothy's obligation to maintain faith and a good conscience, which Hymeneus and Phileus had put away from them, 18,—20.*

## TEXT.

**P**AUL an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;

## PARAPHRASE.

**PAUL**, who is an apostle of Jesus the true Messiah, (*κατ' ἀποστολὴν*) according to the authoritative and gracious appointment of God the Father, who is the original contriver and orderer of the whole scheme of salvation; and of Jesus Christ, who is the great Lord and Redeemer, the author, object, and ground of all our hope toward God, in opposition to any dependence on the works of the law for justification; and is the only Mediator, in and through whom, as revealed in us by his Spirit, according to the gospel-discovery of him, we have good hope of eternal glory, (*Col. i. 27.*)

2 Unto Timothy my own son in the faith: grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 He, who thus asserts his apostolic office, to bind what he is going to write upon the consciences of all that are concerned in it, even I *Paul* send this epistle to you, my dear *Timothy*, who are already fully convinced of my divine authority, and whom I regard with all the tenderness and affection of a father to his own genuine son, as I was the instrument of bringing you to, and establishing you in, the faith of Christ †; and

## NOTE.

† As the apostle called *Timothy* his own genuine son in the faith, (*υἱόν*) and frequently styled him his son *Timothy*, (*ver. 28. 2 Tim. i. 2. and 1 Cor. iv. 7*) it seems probable that he had been the instrument of his conversion to the faith of Christ, as the Messiah spoken of in the old Testament-prophecy, though we have no particular ac-

count of it in the short history of the beginning of the apostle's acquaintance with him: for he commonly speaks of those under this tender appellation to whom he had been so, as of *Titus* and *Onesimus*, *Tit. i. 4.* and *Philem. ver. 10.*; and speaks of himself as a spiritual father, and of those as his children whom he had begotten by the gospel, *1 Cor. iv. 14.*

and as you are a young man, and a spiritual child of my own likeness, and have faithfully served with me, as a son with a father, in the gospel, (*Phil. ii. 20, 22.*) May the divine favour, in all its freeness and fulness, and the divine compassion, in all the variety of its merciful and tender exercises, which you, as a minister, more than private Christians, will need, in a special manner, to support, relieve, encourage, and comfort you under all the temptations, labours, difficulties and dangers of your station; and to pity and pardon all your failings, (see the note on *Rom. i. 7.*) and may all the blessings of peace, with God and in your own soul, and between you and those among whom you may be cast, together with all manner of prosperity, abound richly toward you from God our Father, as the eternal fountain of all good, and from Christ Jesus our Lord, as the purchaser, and more immediate author and conveyor of it through the merit of his own blood.

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine;

3 As I desired and exhorted you (*καταμαρτυροῦσα*) to continue some time after me at *Ephesus*, when I took my leave of that famous city, and passed into *Macedonia*; (*Acts xx. 1,—4.*) I would now remind you of my design therein, and give you further instruction about it, which is, that you might in the name, and by the authority of Christ communicated to you by me his apostle, solemnly enjoin some well-known judaizing Christians there, and in those parts, that they never dare to broach any doctrine different from, much less contrary to, and corrupting of, the simplicity of that which I have faithfully preached, under divine inspiration among them, and wherever I have gone.

4 Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions; rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; so do.

4 And ye are to charge them, that they never regard, or propagate any fabulous *Jewish* traditions, that are groundless, and destructive of the purity of the gospel; nor attend to the frivolous pretences of this and that particular person to his pedigree in an uninterrupted line from *Abraham*, or others of the patriarchs\*, which lead to useless, intricate and endless controversies†, and have no good tendency to spiritual edification after a godly sort, such as is approved of God, and has

#### N O T E S.

15, 2 *Cor. xii. 14.* *Gal. iv. 19.* and 1 *Thess. ii. 11.* But I do not find that he ever used this appellation with regard to any that were not converted by his ministry.

\* These genealogies, as Dr *Lightfoot* observes, were not any of the genealogies in scripture; but their long intricate pedigrees, that they stood upon to prove themselves *Jews, Levites, priests*, and the like: and

to this we may add the genealogy and pedigree of their traditions, which they derived, by a long line of succession, through the hands of many doctors, (*Vol. I. p. 308.*)

† Rather than is observed by critics to be often used, not in a comparative but negative sense, as in *Luke xviii. 14.* *John iii. 19.* and *xii. 43.* and 2 *Tim. iii. 4.*



has him for its author; nor are at all useful for establishing the doctrines of faith in Christ, or bringing any to believe in him, or building them up on their most holy faith, who have believed through grace.

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of faith unfeigned:

5 Now the end, which is aimed at †, and you ought to pursue, in the charge I ordered you to enforce upon judaizing Christians, (*ver. 3.*) in opposition to their fabulous, fruitless, and perplexing disputes, (*ver. 4.*) is to promote a spirit of love toward God, and Christ, and one another, as springing from a sanctified heart, and a faithful, pure, and quiet conscience, that is purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; as also from a principle of sincere faith, without the least hypocrisy, (*ἀνυσταστῶς*).

6 From which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling;

6 From all which some, as appears by their language and behaviour under a profession of Christianity, having missed the grand mark, (*ἀροχρεωτικῶς*) and wandered from the main scope, to which all doctrines and practices ought to be directed, have turned into a very different and directly contrary course, in vainly talking of things that are altogether unprofitable; and serve only to stir up animosities, strife, and doubtful disputations, like their idle fables and endless genealogies, (*ver. 4.*)

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

7 They affecting to set up for doctors and interpreters of the Jewish law, by their corrupt and uncertain traditions, and to impose it upon the Gentiles; while at the same time, they, in reality, neither apprehend the true scope and design of that law itself, nor the things which they confidently assert in their false glosses upon it.

8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

8 But those of us, who are enlightened in the knowledge of the gospel, and in the principal tendency and design of the whole Jewish dispensation, are thoroughly convinced of its being a wise and holy institution, as it was appointed of God for answering good purposes, if a regular and proper use be made of it, according to his intention, for bringing us to Christ, (*Gal. iii. 24.*) even the ceremonial law is of great use, if we consider it as having a typical reference to him and the gospel-state, in which it is fulfilled by him, and not as to

be

## N O T E

† The end of the commandment is supposed by some to mean the end of the law, and by others of the gospel; but it rather seems to me to be most immediately meant of the charge or commandment, which the apostle had directed Timothy, (*ver. 3.*) to give to them who taught other doctrine. Thus he

says, I besought thee to abide at Ephesus (*ὡς παραγγέλλω*) that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, and here, answerable to the word there used, it is (*τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας*) the end of the commandment or charge is charity, &c.

be continued with a perpetual obligation for observing its ritual ordinances, as judaizers vainly imagine and contend for; and as to the *moral law*, it is in itself of an excellent nature, as holy, just, and good; and it is still of admirable use to convince us of sin, and of our need of a Saviour, and is as good and perfect, and of as immutable obligation to be obeyed now, as ever, if it be duly considered and made use of, as a rule of life, and standard of all righteousness to be complied with, not for justification to life, as those false teachers would persuade us, but upon evangelical principles of faith and love, in a conscientious discharge of every duty that is owing to God, our neighbour and ourselves, that he may be glorified thereby.

\* Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers.

9 And we are at the same time fully satisfied, that the *moral law*, as still continuing in force, and made the law of Christ's kingdom under the gospel-state, is not designed to condemn, nor does its damnatory sentence lye against (*εναντι*) a true believer in Christ, who is justified through faith in him, and who, from a principle of faith, has an impartial respect to all its commands \*; but it is made with its sanction, and stands in force for the condemnation of impenitent and unbelieving transgressors, and of those that will not be subject to the authority of God in it; such as are impious wretches, that have not the fear of God in their hearts, and wilfully turn aside from his holy commandments, and that worship false gods, like the idolatrous *Gentiles*; and such as are destitute of all true holiness, and are contemners of God and religion; and such as do not stick at the horrible sin of parricide, or of murdering their parents whether fathers or mothers; and would maliciously destroy the life of any man whatsoever;

10 For where-  
moongers, for them  
that defile them-  
selves

10 It is also in force for the condemnation of such as are guilty of fornication or adultery, (*πορνεία*) or of any unlawful familiarity between persons of a different sex; and

#### N O T E.

\* "The law is not made for a righteous man" evidently relates to its not being made to condemn him; because it really is made for such an one, as well as others, to be the rule of his obedience, and to restrain him for transgressing it: but since there is no man, that lives and sins not, the righteous man, whom it is not made to condemn, is to be understood of one that is righteous in the eye of the law through the righteousness of Christ received by faith: and that the *moral law* is here intended, appears from the nature of the crimes specified, as subjecting persons to condemnation by it, which

are manifestly such as were forbidden in the law of the ten commandments, and may be reduced to one or other of its precepts. (See Dr *Whitby's* note.) And as the 9th and 10th verses most obviously speak of the same law, though in the 9th verse it is put with the article in the Greek, and in the 10th without it, here Mr *Lake's* criticism on the word *law*, (*νομος*) as having a different meaning, when used with and without the article, seems to fail, as it does in several other places: Nor is it always attended to by that learned gentleman himself, according to what we have observed in the note on Rom. iii. 19.

lives with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

and such as are chargeable with the unnatural and detestable sin of Sodom; such as venture to steal men, that they may either use, or sell them for slaves; such as addict themselves to lies in common conversation; such as perjure themselves in courts of judicature; and such as go into any other sort of wickedness, in heart and life, that is contrary to the pure and wholesome doctrine of divine revelation, besides these that have been specified: All such persons are condemned by the righteous law of God, which severely forbids every kind of iniquity.

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

11 Their crimes are equally contrary to, and condemned by, the holy nature, design, and obligation of the gospel, which illustriously displays the glorious perfections, counsels and operations of the ever blessed God, who has an infinite satisfaction and delight in and of himself, immutably without beginning, alteration, or end, and is the fountain of all happiness to others, by means of, and according to the tenor of this most excellent gospel, which is a *doctrine according to godliness*, (chap. vi. 3.) and is glorious in its whole scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, and in its happy and holy effects on them that believe, (Rom. i. 16.) and which I have been intrusted with, by divine revelation and commission, as a precious and sacred depositum to be faithfully preserved; and dispensed wherever I come.

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

12 And while I think of the high honour of this important trust, I cannot but, from the very bottom of my soul, bless the name of Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, Lord, and King, and give vent to the grateful glowing sentiments of my heart, in all ascriptions of praise to him, who has qualified, authorized, and strengthened me (*ἐνδυναμώσας*) for this eminent service; inasmuch that, having formed me for himself, he was pleased to make account of me, as a faithful servant; and so called me to, and vested me in the apostolic office, to minister the gospel of his grace.

13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief:

13 Even me, the unlikeliest and unworthiest of all others, considering that, till his grace reached and turned my heart, I was a furious blasphemer of his divine person and sacred doctrine; and an outrageous persecutor of his members, even unto imprisonment and death; and a most injurious reviler, (*ὀνειδίζων*) of his name, people, and interest, (Acts ix. 1, 2. and Luke xxiii. 34.) But, notwithstanding all these complicated, incensing provocations, I, O sweetly-amazing thought! found forgiving mercy, there being just room for it, according to the extensive declarations of pardoning

grace, and Christ's prayer for ignorant offenders (*Matth. xii. 31. and Luke xxiii. 34.*) † because I did all this, not under a conviction of his being the true Messiah, and with desperate malicious enmity to him, as such, in defiance of that conviction: No, on the other hand, *I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus,* (*Acts xxvi. 9.*) and so all was the effect of blind, though very unreasonable and criminal prejudices against him, and of rash, mad, and misguided zeal, under the power of unbelief.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 And the free favour of our gracious and compassionate Lord was so amazingly great to such an obstinate self-deluding wretch as I was, that (*υπερπληθυνει*) it superabounded toward me, far beyond what is usual or could be fully expected, or can be estimated, or conceived of, it working effectual faith in my heart, who was before so perverse and resolute an unbeliever; and in producing a cordial affectionate love in my soul to himself, and delight in him, as the anointed Saviour, and in his people and cause, though I was before so violent and injurious an enemy to, and persecutor of him and them.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

15 What adds greatly to the pleasure of my reflections on this exceeding abundant grace toward myself is, that here is a wide door opened for the very worst of sinners; in love to whose souls, I now as passionately long for their happiness, as I before opposed it: I can now assure them from my own good experience, as well as from the whole tenor of the gospel-revelation, that its grand summary article may be firmly depended upon, as divinely true and faithful, and is every way worthy to be universally, believingly, and affectionately embraced by all, whether greater or lesser sinners that hear it, as it consists in this joyful, nearly concerning, and best of all other declarations, viz. That the great end and design of Christ's assuming human nature in his incarnation, and coming into this lower world, under the character of a Saviour, to fulfil the law, suffer and

#### N O T E.

† It is not to be supposed that the apostle, by saying "because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief," meant that his ignorance and unbelief were deserving; or were a proper cause of his obtaining mercy: For it would be strange indeed to imagine, that there were any merit in an ignorance which was owing to a wilful rejection of the clearest means of knowledge; and in unbelief, which is itself a heinous sin, with an entail of damnation upon it, under the light of the gospel; accordingly the apostle in the next

words speaks with high admiration of the "grace of the Lord Jesus, as exceeding abundant towards him," who considered himself as the chief of sinners: But his ignorance and unbelief did not shut him out of the sphere of mercy, as it left him a capable subject of it, according to the grace of the gospel; whereas, had his blasphemy and persecutions been maliciously practised, contrary to his knowledge and belief of Christ's being the true Messiah, they would have amounted to the unpardonable sin.

and die in the room and stead of sinners, was, that he might deliver them from sin and wrath through faith in him, whether they be idolatrous *Gentiles*, or blind, prejudiced, and persecuting *Jews*, like what I myself was; and might bring them to that salvation, which is in him, with eternal glory: A greater proof, and more encouraging instance of which, can scarce be imagined, than has appeared in me; who have been indeed the most notorious, first-rate sinner, exceeding all others in my malignant blasphemy of Christ, and persecution of his members.

16 Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

16 But, (aaaa) still further to encourage all sorts of sinners to believe in Christ for the remission of sins, how great or many soever they have been, I must add, that this astonishing instance of free, sovereign, and abundant grace toward me, was designed, not merely for the salvation of my own soul: But Infinite Wisdom ordered it likewise with a view to the salvation of others, to whom I am appointed to preach these glad tidings, that in me first of all †, and as the chief of sinners, the gracious and compassionate Saviour might exercise all forbearance and patience, while I was, for a long while, amidst the light of the gospel, going on in the high road of rebellion against him; and that he might set me forth as the most remarkable sample of what rich grace they may warrantably hope to find in him, who, after all their opposition to him, shall be brought, under an affecting humbling sense of their guilt and danger, (as I was) to put their trust alone in him for the pardon of sin, acceptance with God, and safe conduct to eternal life.

17 Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible,

17 Now, in reflection on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ \*, to whom I have made my religious grateful

#### N O T E.

† Here seems to be a direct reference back to what the apostle said of himself ver. 15, of whom I am chief, (ὡς ἀρχὸς ἡμεῶν) and here he says in me first, or the chief, (πρῶτος ἡμεῶν)

\* As Christ Jesus our Lord, I apprehend, is the only subject spoken of, and all along mentioned in the five preceding verses, the connection carries this lofty ascription of glory most immediately to him, considered as God; and as the apostle (ver. 1, 11, 12.) had equally joined God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, as giving him his divine and apostolic commission, and had equally wished grace, mercy and peace to Timothy from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, (ver. 2.) and as he (ver. 12.) went into the most religious thanksgivings to Christ

for putting him into the ministry; it seems most natural to understand him, as closing the account of what Christ had therein done for him, with a doxology to him; and if, as some suppose, "the king eternal signifies" "the king of ages," (βασιλεὺς τῶν αἰώνων) meaning the patriarchal, Mosaic, and evangelical ages, with what great propriety may Christ be considered as that king, who often appeared as the great Jehovah, that ordered and governed the two former, as well as chiefly acts, as king of the church in the last of these dispensations? Nor is it any just objection to this doxology's being offered to Christ, that the like as some think, is presented to God the Father, chap. vi. 15, 16; (see the note there) since the divine titles, and essential characters of Godhead are frequently ascribed

sible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

ful acknowledgments for having put me into the ministry, (*ver.* 12.) I solemnly ascribe all honour and glory to him, as the sovereign Lord and governor of the whole creation, who is from everlasting to everlasting the incorruptible God; invisible, as to his divine nature; the only being, inclusive of the Father and Spirit, that is possessed of infinitely perfect wisdom, originally and essentially in himself, and is the giver of all wisdom to others, and makes them wise unto salvation that believe in him: May he be magnified and adored in the loftiest strains, from henceforth through all succeeding time, and to an endless eternity! *Amen.* So let it be, so it ought to be, and so it will be among those that know and love him.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.

18 The charge by which I have ordered you, my dear son *Timothy*, to remonstrate with all authority against those that would teach any other doctrine than you have received, † (*ver.* 3, 4, 5.) and which I commit, as a sacred trust to you, from whom there are justly great expectations of eminent service, according to the intimations which the Holy Ghost had given by some New Testament-prophets, before you entered on your office, as a person marked out for it, and to be remarkably endowed with superior extraordinary gifts, and miraculous powers, for fulfilling it; which I now remind you of; that, in reflection upon these things, you may be the more excited to act the part of a faithful, diligent, and courageous soldier of Jesus Christ, in fighting his battles, under him, against sin, Satan, and the world, and in standing up valiantly for the truth against all opposition.

19 Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

19 In which, as ever you would acquit yourself with honour and advantage, and as becomes your character and function, it concerns you to be stedfast in the faith of the gospel, to hold it fast, and to hold it forth in your ministry; and to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man, (*Acts* xxiv. 16.) that you may be upright

#### N O T E.

scribed to the Father and the Son, to show that they, in nature and divine properties, are one God, in distinction from all other pretended deities, though in other places they are personally distinguished from each other: Nor is it any greater objection (as I humbly apprehend) against applying that part of this description of God to our Lord Jesus Christ, in which he is said to be *invisible*; since this relates, not to his human nature and office-appearances under the Old and New Testament-dispensations; but to his *divine nature*, considered under the for-

mal notion of him, as *God*. However, in this view of him, the Father is no more excluded from this doxology than the Son is, were we to understand it as an ascription of glory to God the Father: But admitting that this was directed to Christ, it is as lofty an ascription of glory and honour to him as is any where made to the Father himself.

† Several expositors have thought that this verse is to be connected with *ver.* 5; and that all the 'others,' which come between, are to be considered as a Parenthesis.

upright and faithful in preaching it, and living answerable to it, which some professors of Christ's name, having rejected † and paid no regard to, have thereupon (as is always to be expected in such cases) renounced the doctrine of faith itself, which they before professed, to their own danger, loss and damage, like one that suffers to the greatest extremity by a shipwreck.

10 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

20 Of this sort of apostates there are two remarkably infamous ringleaders, whom I think myself obliged to point out, that you and all Christians may beware of them, and bear a public testimony against them; they are *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*,\* who were so notorious for subverting the faith and holiness of the gospel, and for broaching their horrible errors, and practising abominable immoralities, that I was under a necessity of exercising the apostolic rod, which Christ has given me, by delivering them up to the power of Satan to inflict punishments upon them in body, or soul, or both, that, by means of so severe a discipline, they might be brought to a conviction of the evil of their hearts and lives; and, by feeling the dreadful consequence of their crimes, might be afraid of persisting in their blasphemous defamations of the name, doctrines, and ways of the Lord, (see the notes on 1 Cor. iv. 21. and 2 Cor. x. 6.)

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How solemn and important, honourable and delightful, is the trust that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ have committed to gospel-ministers! How thankful should they be for it, and desirous of abundance of grace and mercy from these divine persons, to help, pity, and prosper them, that they may be supported under their numerous trials from without and from within, and enabled to be faithful in their Lord's work, according to the qualifications he has given them, and all reasonable expectations from them! They may indeed meet with many virulent and subtle adversaries; some furious persecutors, like *Paul* before his conversion; others apostates, like *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*; and others, that would introduce fabulous traditions, strange doctrines, doubtful disputations, and vain janglings, to the overthrowing of the faith of many nominal professors, instead of promoting spiritual edification: But as all such are to be shunned

### N O T E.

† "Some having put away (ἀποκαταστήσαντες) faith and a good conscience," can by no means prove, that they ever had them before, as some contend: For the word here used properly signifies to reject, or rebel, as in Acts vii. 12. where it is said, that "he that did his neighbour wrong thrust Moses away (ἀποκατέστησεν) saying, Who made thee a ruler and judge over us?" And at other times it is used to signify only a rejecting of what was proposed to persons for their acceptance; as when the "Israelites would not obey Moses, but thrust him from" them; (ἀποκατέστησεν) Acts vii. 39. and when the apostle, speaking of the gospel, said to

the Jews, "Seeing you put it from you, (ἀποκατέστησαν) lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

\* *Hymeneus* was, in all likelihood, the same that is spoken of, 1 Tim. ii. 17. 18. as a pernicious man, who denied the doctrine "of the resurrection, and overthrew the faith of some." And *Alexander* seems to have been the coppersmith, mentioned 1 Tim. iv. 14, 15, "as having done the apostle much evil, and greatly withstood his words;" and was probably that *Alexander* whom the Jews stirred up to declaim against *Paul*, and fix an odium upon him, in the uproar at Ephesus, (see the paraphrase and notes on Acts xix. 33.)

shunned and rejected, while real converts are to be affectionately loved, as genuine children in the faith, with what courage may the servants of Christ stand to their charge, in which they are called to war a good warfare ! And with what pleasure may they recommend the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in hope that the like grace may be extended to other sinners, for working faith and love in them, by means of their preaching it, as has been shewn to themselves ! For they well know, and can assure all about them, on the credit of a divine testimony, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners. O wondrous superabounding grace ! It turns the hearts, and pardons the sins of blasphemers, persecutors and injurious persons, and frees them from the condemnation of the law, which does not stand in force against those that are made righteous through faith in Christ, but only against obstinate, impenitent, and unbelieving sinners, that persist in ungodliness and immoralities of various kinds which are forbidden by the good and holy law of God, and are equally contrary to the sound doctrine of the gospel. But how should sinners tremble at the thought of continuing to oppose and reject the gospel, and making a wrong use of the law ; And how solicitous should preachers and hearers be, that they may live under the power of evangelical love, as proceeding from a sanctified heart ; and that unfeigned faith and a good conscience may be always preserved together ; lest, by violating conscience, they soon make shipwreck of faith ! And with what gratitude and praise should all, that are experimentally acquainted with Christ, according to the gospel-revelation of him, unite their adorations of him, together with the Father and Spirit, as he in his divine nature is, inseparably from them, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God ! To whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle orders prayers to be made every where for all sorts of persons, heathens and their magistrates, as well as others, since the grace of the gospel makes no difference of ranks or nations, 1.—8. And shews how women ought to behave in civil and religious life, 9.—15.*

## TEXT.

I Exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men :

## PARAPHRASE.

AS the prejudices of the judaizing Christians are so strong against the *Gentiles*, and some among them reject the authority of heathen magistrates, I therefore, suitable to my character, as the apostle of the *Gentiles*, do in the first place exhort, that in every Christian assembly, and in family and secret worship, all manner of addresses, in a way of deprecation of evils, and of petitions and pleas for all needful mercies, and in a way of thanksgiving and praise for mercies received, be offered up to God, through Christ, for men of all sorts, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and of all ranks and degrees, whether in higher or lower stations.

a For kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

2 That they be made for civil magistrates, though heathens ; such as bear the title of emperors or kings, or as are in high places of dignity and authority under them, or under any form of government whatsoever, that their persons and administrations may be blessed, and they may rule in the fear of God, as *Israel* were to pray



pray for heathen kings, and the peace of the cities where they were carried captive, (Ezra vi. 10. and Jer. xxix. 7.) and I, as an apostle of a still more benevolent and extensively gracious dispensation, now exhort, that prayers be likewise offered for all sorts of subjects, that we, who are such, may, under the protection of the civil government, and according to God's design in appointing it for the good of the community, live, and pass our time, and transact our affairs, (*δυσωμεν*) with safety and peace, secure from all outrages and violence, public or private, to ourselves and families, or to our civil and religious rights and privileges; and with a tranquillity, that may be subservient to, and exemplified in, all acts of piety toward God, and of moral honesty, virtue, and honourable conversation toward men of every character.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

3 For thus to pray, and thus to live, is in itself fit and right, and every way becoming Christians; and, as such, is agreeable to the good and holy nature and will of God, and well-pleasing in his sight thro' Christ, who has made himself known under the endearing character of God your Saviour and mine, together with all that believe, of what rank or nation soever; there being now no difference, as to this, in his account.

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

4 Who according to the good pleasure of his will, (Ephes. i. 5. 9.) for the more illustrious display of the freeness, sovereignty, variety, and abundant riches of his grace under the gospel-dispensation, intends effectually to save all sorts of men, whether kings or subjects, high or low, greater or lesser sinners, *Jews or Gentiles*; and

#### N O T E.

\* *All men* here, and *all* in verse 6. cannot, without the greatest inattention to the whole scope of the context, be made to signify all and every individual of mankind, and so construed into a proof of universal redemption and salvation: For as these and such like universal terms are often used in a restrained and distributive sense, (see the note on 1 Cor. v. 17.); so all along in the preceding verses, which speak of praying for all men, for kings, &c. and which these verses refer to, as arguments to inforce it against the prejudices of the *Jews*, who despised the *Gentiles*, and their rulers, it is plain, that by *all men* is meant *all sorts of men*, whether *Jews or Gentiles*, *kings or subjects*. To suppose it to signify every individual of mankind, can scarce be reconciled with the apostle *John's* saying (1 John v. 16.) "There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it," that is, for those who evidently appear to have been guilty of the

unpardonable sin; much less are *thanks* to be offered for such, and all the wicked of the earth. But the *all men*, whom God will have to be saved, are those only whom he will have to be "brought to the knowledge of the truth," which cannot be said of all mankind, universally without exception: since a great part of the world neither are, nor ever were enlightened with the knowledge of the gospel itself. But a great number of both *Jews and Gentiles* of various nations, and some of all ranks and orders of people, have been not only favoured with the gospel, but also sparingly taught to know the truth, as it is in Jesus: And of *this* all it is said, Christ gave himself a ransom for them, ver 6, as the procuring cause of their being brought to the knowledge of the truth; and eternally saved by that means, according to the will of God: And to suppose that God really willed the illumination and salvation, which he never effected, and the means of

and, in order hereunto, determines that the gospel shall be published to every creature, (*Mark xvi. 15.* see the note there) that sinners of every nation may be brought to a saving acquaintance with its important truths, relating to the way of pardon and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, in whom alone there is salvation for them, (*Acts iv. 12.*)

5 For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

5 For though he was formerly, in a peculiar and restrained sense, the God of the Jews, there is now, according to ancient prophecies, (*Zech. xiv. 9.*) one and the same God to them, and to the Gentiles also, seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith, (*Rom. iii. 29, 30.*) and though the Gentiles have set up many mediators to pacify and intercede with their superior gods, and though Moses and the high priests under the law were a sort of mediators between God and the people of Israel, and them only †; yet there is now one and the same, and only one Mediator of reconciliation and intercession between God and men of all nations, who were at variance with him by reason of sin, even the great and glorious, yea, divine man, Jesus Christ, who assumed human nature into personal union with himself, as the Son of God; and so was truly man, as well as God, and thereby completely fitted for, and accordingly performed the office of an interposing Saviour between both the offended and offending parties, God and man; the nature and interest of both being united in him: It is therefore highly proper, that prayers and praises should be offered up to God for all sorts of men through him, in whom all nations shall be blessed.

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

6 Who being Lord of his own life, (*John x. 18.*) and having an infinite dignity in his person as God-man, freely offered up himself, soul and body, an atoning sacrifice to God, and laid down his life as a price of redemption, (*ἀντίλυτρον*) or as a ransom paid to divine justice,

#### N O T E.

of which he never granted, is to defeat "the counsel of his will, who works all things according to it," (*Ephes. i. 11.*) in ways that are suitable to the different make of his creatures in the moral, as well as in the natural world, without any force upon the free and rational faculties of mankind; and he hath said, with respect to the government of their affairs, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," (*Isa. xlii. 10.*)

† Christ's being styled *man*, when spoken of as Mediator between God and men, is no more an argument against his being also God, in the discharge of that office, than it

being at other times said, that "the Lord of glory was crucified, and God purchased the church with his own blood," (*1 Cor. ii. 8.* and *Acts ii. 28.*) is an argument against his being *man*, in his sufferings and bloodshed; and as he is expressly called *the one Mediator*, this must exclude all others, such as saints and angels, which the Papists set up, and idolatrously worship as their mediators, in like manner as the Gentiles had formerly set up many mediators, to pacify and intercede with their superior gods, (see Mr Joseph Mede's works, pag. 772, &c.)

justice; by his suffering in the room and stead of many, (*Math. xx. 28.*) to deliver them from the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, and death; (see the note on *ver. 4.*) even vast multitudes, which no man can number, of all nations, ranks and degrees, whom he *redeemed from among men*, (*Rev. v. 9. and vii. 9.*) a testimony to which was given by the former prophets in their days, (*1 Pet. i. 10, 11.*) and was to be still more clearly given, as it now is, under the New Testament-dispensation, by preaching the gospel in its proper season, first to the *Jews*; and afterwards to the *Gentiles*. (*Rom. i. 16.*)

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the *Gentiles* in faith and verity.

7 Unto the publishing of which gospel, I am appointed, and authorized of God, to be, as it were, a herald, (*αγγελος*) and an apostle; with an extensive commission to proclaim it, without restriction to the *Jews*; (whatsoever those of the circumcision may think, I solemnly declare, and appeal to Christ, as a believer in him, and in his omniscient presence, who is witness to what I say, that I herein speak, with the strictest veracity, without the least prevarication) I am in a special manner ordained of God to be a preacher, particularly to the *Gentiles*, of the faith and truth, or true faith of the gospel; that his will, for saving purposes, may be made known to them by me, with all faithfulness and sincerity.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands; without wrath and doubting;

8 I therefore, according to this divine commission toward the *Gentiles*, insist upon it, as in the name of my great Lord and Master, that Christians, and particularly men, that are the peoples mouth to God, pray for all the fore mentioned sorts of persons, not with a confinement to the temple, and *Jewish* synagogues, but in every place, as there may be opportunity and convenience for it; one being no more holy now than another: (*John iv. 21,—24.*) And this ought to be done with fervour, purity, and elevation of heart to God, in token of which holy men have used to lift up their hands in their sacred devotions, without a wrathful temper, like that which discovers itself in the malice and indignation of the *Jews* against the *Gentiles*; and without doubting whether God will hear the prayer of faith, or whether he will be gracious in saving *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, that believe in Christ; and without reasoning and disputing against it. (*διαλογισμεν*.)

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame

9 I also alike insist upon it, that women appear, as at all times, so especially at religious assemblies, neat and decent in a garb suitable to the modesty of their sex, (*μεταλαβειν και συρροειν*) with an air of reverence of God

shame - steadness and sobriety : not with broadened hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array ;

God and of sacred things, and in a prudent, sober manner ; not adorning themselves \* with curiously curled and plaited hair, after the manner of lewd women, or with gay and showy deckings of gold and precious stones, or any rich and gaudy apparel, (1 Pet. iii. 3.) which, when they are fond of them, and excessive in them beyond their circumstances, discover pride and vanity of heart, and a greater solicitude of appearing before men than before God.

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

10 But (as is most decent and honourable for religious women, that make a profession of piety, and of a supreme regard to the things of another world) their chief concern should be to put on the shining ornaments of such graces, practices and performances, as are good in themselves, conformable to the holy law of God, and of great price in his sight, and useful to others.

11 Let the women learn in silence with all subjection :

11 According to the becoming modesty with which women ought to behave in church-assemblies, let them listen to public ministrations with meekness and silence, and in due subjection to the superior characters of their husbands, and the ministers, of whom they are to learn the things of God.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

12 But I by no means permit †, that the woman should take upon her publicly to preach in the church, (see the notes on 1 Cor. xi. 3. and xiv. 3.) nor do I allow that, under any pretence whatsoever, she assume an authority to herself that betokens a superiority to the man : But I insist upon it, that, in all religious assemblies, she, suitable to the order of her sex, behave with a meek and silent subjection to him ; and the reason of this is found-  
ed

#### N O T E.

\* The *adornings* condemned here, and 1 Pet. iii. 4. are such as were over-curious and extravagant, rich and costly, above the rank, station and ability of those that wore them, and as tended to puff up the pride, levity and vanity of their own hearts, and to entice others to wantonness, by those ways of decking themselves ; and they seem to be such adornings, as were chiefly, if not entirely, used as the attire of harlots. (See Dr Whitby's note here, and on 1 Pet. iii. 4.) but that some adornings are lawful on proper occasions, according to peoples different stations, is evident from their having been worn by Rebecca and Queen Esther, Gen. xxiv. 22, 30. and Esth. v. 1. and from the allusions that are made to them, with approbation, in setting forth the beauty and glory of the church, Psal. xiv. 9, 13. Isa. lxi. 10. and Ezek. xvi. 10, 12, 14, 16. The reason therefore against these sorts of adornings, either

relates to those that were some way excessive, fantastical, luxurious, or indecent ; or else to an *affectation* of outward dress, rather than the brighter ornaments of virtue, modesty and chastity, piety, holiness and good works, (chap. v. 16.) as those forms of expression are sometimes to be understood, not in an absolutely negative, but *comparative* sense, (see Exod. xvi. 8. Joel ii. 13. and Luke xiv. 12. 13.)

† The *teaching* here forbid to the woman relates to *public preaching* ; but does not exclude her from engaging in private family-instruction of children, or others, either by herself or with her husband, as Timothy's mother and grandmother most probably taught him the knowledge of the holy scriptures, 1 Tim. iii. 15. ; and as Priscilla joined with Aquila in privately expounding the way of God to Apollos, Acts xviii. 26.

ed in the original law of nature, and in the state of things immediately after the fall.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

13 For *Adam*, the common father of all mankind, was brought into being by the great Creator before his wife *Eve*, who was made out of one of his ribs, (*Gen. ii. 21.*) which intimates, that *the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man*, (1 Cor. xi. 9.) and that, by consequence, she ought to be in proper subjection to him.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

14 And as to the ruin that is brought upon mankind by the fall, it was not *Adam* that was deceived, and drawn into sin, by the immediate stratagem by the serpent; but *Eve*, his wife, being imposed upon by that subtle adversary, was the first of them that went into the transgression of the law of God, which forbade their eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death; and she was the means of her husband's doing the same, (*Gen. iii. 1,—6, 12, 13.*) without his own being seduced by the serpent himself, and (which indeed aggravated his sin) without any deception, but knowingly, as induced to it by his fond affection to his wife.

15 Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

15 However, the female sex \* shall be so far relieved against the righteous sentence upon the first woman, (*Gen. iii. 16.*) that they shall be carried through the sorrows of child-bearing, sometimes with safety, and always with freedom from them as a curse; and shall certainly be saved with an everlasting salvation, in case they prove themselves to be real Christians, by continuing in the exercise of faith, and trust in God through Christ, the promised seed; and as the fruit of their faith, in love to God and his people; and in all conjugal chastity and holiness of heart and life, together with a due moderation of their passions and appetites, and a sober behaviour, as becomes women professing godliness, which *has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* (Chap. iv. 8.)

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How abundantly more extensive is the grace of God under the gospel-dispensation, than it was in the *Jewish* ages! He intends the salvation of all sorts of persons, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, high or low, greater or lesser sinners; and accordingly will bring in multitudes of them to the saving knowledge of Christ,

## N O T E.

\* *She shall be saved*, cannot relate personally to *Eve*, who was dead long before, whereas this is a promise for time to come: And therefore I take it to relate to *women* in general, that were involved with her in the sentence pronounced, *Gen. iii. 16.* and so

*she* is a noun of multitude, including the whole sex; accordingly, by an analogy of number, frequent in such cases, it is expressed, in the latter part of this verse, by *their* continuing in faith, &c. (See Dr Wherry's note.)

Christ, who is the only Mediator between the offended God and offending man, and freely gave himself up to death, as a price of redemption to satisfy divine justice for all of every character that shall believe in him, and to deliver them from sin, and from the wrath to come. What a blessed and encouraging ground of hope, and of prayer, is here, for kings and subjects, that by means of a gospel-ministry, which Christ has appointed to testify his atoning death, they may be brought to know and believe in him, though at present they be strangers and enemies to him! And how pleasing to God is it, that Christian subjects, on all occasions, and whenever they are engaged in divine worship, without regard to any distinction of places, be importunate in prayer, and hearty in thanksgivings for their political governors, as they are ordained of God for the good of the community, that, under their protection and favour, they may live in quiet possession of their religious and civil rights, and have full liberty for the discharge of all moral and Christian duties! Women, as well as men, are to join in public worship, and to behave with decency, like persons professing godliness: They ought not to be fond of decking themselves with splendid attire, nor set their hearts upon fine and sumptuous dress, but upon the richer and brighter ornaments of virtue and grace, and aboundings in every good work: And remembering the rank in which God has placed their sex by the law of creation; and after the fall, in which the woman was first in the transgression, they should take heed of every thing that looks like an affectation of superiority to the man, and be silent learners with due subjection, and not preachers in the church: And as ever they would be comforted under the dismal effects of the fall, and be carried safe through the sorrows and dangers of child-bearing, and get at last to heaven, it behoves them to live in an exercise of faith and love, chastity, holiness, and sobriety: For, blessed be God! here is a gracious promise of rich mercy to such.

### C H A P. III.

*The apostle describes what ought to be the qualifications and behaviour of gospel-bishops, 1,—7. And of deacons and their wives, 8,—13. And gives Timothy a reason of his writing so particularly to him about these, and other church-affairs, for directing his own conduct, as an evangelist, 14,—16.*

#### TEXT.

THIS is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

#### PARAPHRASE.

TO proceed to some other directions, that may be needful for you, my son *Timothy*, to be acquainted with, in order to a due discharge of your trust, as an evangelist; it is certainly true, and may well be said, that if any Christian, properly qualified, is inclined, with a view to the glory of God and the good of souls, to enter upon the office of a pastor, or overseer of God's flock, to perform the part of a bishop in the oversight of it, (see the notes on *Acts* xx. 28. and *1 Pet.* v. 2.) he aims at a very important, honourable, and useful, though laborious post and service: (*xaxw 177w*) But that you and such may know, and the church may judge, and not be imposed upon, it is proper to draw out some account of what sort of qualifications are needful for a faithful and acceptable discharge of the duties of such a high and laborious station.

1 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

2 A bishop, or pastor, then, ought to be an inoffensive man; of an unexceptionable moral character, in every relation of life, *that the ministry be not blamed*; (2 Cor. vi. 3.) and, if he be not a single man\*, he ought by no means to have any more than one wife at a time; no, nor on any account, except in case of adultery, to divorce his wife, and marry another, whilst she is living: (Mat. xxi. 32.) He ought also to be very circumspect and diligent in his work, watchful against Satan and all his instruments, and watchful over his own spirit, words, and actions, and for the souls of those that are committed to his charge; and to be very moderate in his appetites, passions and pleasures; to be affable, courteous, prudent, and engaging in the general course of his conversation towards all men; and to be of a generous soul, ready, according to his ability, to relieve the necessities of the poor†, and entertain godly strangers, ministers, or others, that are well recommended to him; and he should be well furnished with a good stock of Christian knowledge and experience, and capable of expressing his sentiments with freedom, clearness, and propriety, for the instruction of others, and for supporting and defending the truths of the gospel on all suitable occasions; as also to be ready to improve all proper opportunities for it.

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, nor covetous;

3 He ought by no means to be a wine-bibber, (Mat. xi. 19.) or a lover of strong drink to any excess; nor to be a man of a quarrelsome and surious temper, like one whose passions are too strong, upon provocation; to keep his tongue from grievous scurrility, or his hands from violence; nor ought he to be eagerly fond of the riches of this world, which are defiling gains, especially to one of his character, when procured by any base unworthy means: But he should be one of a meek, calm, peaceable, and forbearing spirit, (2 Tim. ii. 24.) not abusive, noisy, and clamorous in his way of talking and disputing; nor so in love with the things of this

#### N O T E.

\* *The husband of one wife*, neither means that a bishop or pastor is obliged to marry, nor that he ought never to marry a second wife, the prohibition of which would be contrary to natural rights, and the design of the law of marriage itself; neither of which was ever intended to be set aside by the gospel-dispensation: But it is designed to guard against *polygamy*, and against divorces on frivolous occasions, both which were frequent among the Jews, but condemned by our Lord, Mat. xix. 3, 9. and therefore mini-

sters, of all others, ought to stand clear of either of those sins.

† *A lover of hospitality* properly signifies a friend to strangers; (*philoxenos*) and as *inns* for public entertainment were not very usual in those days, it was a becoming part of the character of bishops to be open-hearted to poor Christians, that were strangers, especially to such as were driven into their neighbourhoods by persecutions, and to ministers that went about from place to place to preach the gospel.

this world, as to prefer the fleece to the flock, and to seek *theirs*, rather than *them*. (2 Cor. xii. 14.)

4 Furthermore, if he have a family and children, he ought to keep up good discipline and decorum in his house, and maintain a prudent authority over his children, as well as servants, to oblige them, like *Abraham*, (Gen. xviii. 19.) to submit to regular orders, both with regard to religion and manners, as may be most honourable and comely for him and them.

5 For if a man have the charge of a family, whose affairs are more easy to be managed, and of less consequence, and do not know how to govern it well, as becomes the master of his own house; how can it reasonably be expected, that he should have prudence, care, and resolution enough, to preside in the management of the higher and more difficult affairs of the church of the living God, (*ver. 15.*) in which all things are to be done decently and in order, exactly according to his Lord's appointment? (1 Cor. xiv. 40. see the note there.)

6 He ought not to be a raw upstart, nor, ordinarily, one that is but newly converted to the faith of Christ, and planted in his church; (*νεοφυτος*) lest being puffed up with a high conceit of his gifts and smattering knowledge, (which has more heat than light) or with popular applause, or with the honour of being so soon advanced to such an eminent station in the church, he, through the instigation of Satan, fall into the same condemnation, and by means of the same pride, as the devil himself did, when, not contented with his station among the glorious angels, he left his first habitation, and is thereupon reserved in everlasting chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. (Jude, *ver. 6.*)

7 Once more. He ought to be a man of clear reputation, not only with Christians themselves, but also among unbelievers, whether *Jews* or *Heathens*, that are out of the pale of the church, and watch for the halting of gospel-professors, and especially of gospel-ministers; lest he give too great occasion for reproach upon himself, and upon the name, doctrine, and ways of the Lord; and so the devil catch an advantage against him, to the injury of his own soul, and of his usefulness; and to the discredit of religion, the triumph of its adversaries, and the grief and stumbling of young converts.

8 And as to another sort of church-officers, that are set apart, as deacons, who are appointed to take care of the poor, and manage the church-stock for serving tables,

\* One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given



given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre,

tables, (*Acts* vi. 2. see the note there.) They likewise, as to their *moral* character, ought to be (*σπουδοι*) men of a grave; decent, and venerable behaviour, and of good report, (*Acts* vi. 3.); not given to dissimulation, speaking one thing and meaning another, or carrying two faces, and talking at one time contrary to what they say at another, as may best serve a turn; nor ought they to indulge themselves in drinking too freely of any strong liquors, which would not only be a reproach upon their characters, but render them very unfit for the duties of their office; nor ought they to be of an avaricious temper, that would slacken their hands to the poor, and be a temptation to act the part of unfaithful stewards, in privately appropriating some of the church's stock to their own use.

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

9 As to their *religious* character, they ought to be found in the faith, stedfastly adhering to, and persevering in, the pure unmixed doctrines of the gospel, which are indeed a mystery to the carnal unbelieving world, and exceed the comprehension of enlightened minds themselves; the deacons ought to hold these fast in their belief and profession, with all the sincerity of a heart, that is purified by faith, and purged from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ.

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

10 And in order to their being chosen to this office, they, as well as pastors, ought to be first tried, proved, and approved of, as to their moral and religious character; and then, being found unblameable with regard to any notorious crime, or any remarkable defect in the forementioned qualifications, they should be introduced into the office, and intrusted with the whole business of a deacon, in all its parts.

11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

11 In like manner, (if they are in a married state) their wives, for the credit of religion, suitable to the near relation in which they stand to these church-officers, ought to be persons of a grave, chaste, and decent behaviour, free from all lightness of temper, words, dress, and deportment; they ought not to be defamers of others by false accusations, (*ψευδομαρτυρία*) which is the very spirit of the devil himself; much less should they be tale-bearers of injurious things, especially to the poor, lest the deacons, their husbands, be thereby prejudiced against them: But they should be (*επιμενεῖς*) watchful over their tongues and passions, temperate in eating and drinking, and careful in family-economy within their own sphere, from whence the husband may take hints for prudent and frugal management in supplying the wants of the poor; and they

ought to be, not only faithful to the marriage-bed, but just and true to all the trusts committed to them, with faithfulness to God, to their husbands, and others, never daring to purloin, or embezzle any of the church's treasure.

11 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

12 The deacons also, as well as pastors, (*ver. 2.* see the note there) ought to avoid the sin of polygamy and unlawful divorces, keeping to one wife, as long as she lives; and whether they have children, or other members of their families, they, as persons placed in a public station of a religious nature, ought to set a good example to others, by maintaining a due decorum in the order of their houses.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

13 They ought carefully to attend to these things: For such as have acquitted themselves with fidelity, and for any length of time, in discharging the deacon's office, well deserve, and will certainly obtain high degrees of honour and respect in the church\*; and, in that way, may warrantably hope to acquire and increase in gifts and graces suitable to their stations; and they will be emboldened, from the testimony of their own consciences to their fidelity, and from the just reputation they have gained in the church and the world, to be open, free, and courageous in their profession of the pure and unmixed doctrine of Christ, and of their faith in him, whereby they have derived grace from him, to enable them to be faithful in fulfilling their trust for his glory.

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

14 I write these things, in brief, for your direction, and to be communicated, as there may be occasion, to others; hoping at the same time to have an opportunity, ere long, of coming to you at *Ephesus*, or elsewhere, to give you still farther instructions.

15 But if I tar-  
ry

15 But if God in his providence should order my being

#### N O T E S.

\* The *good degree* which they purchase, or procure to themselves, seems rather to relate to the honour they should rise to in the esteem of the church, than to their advancement to the pastoral office: For that office is a *distinct order* from the deacon's, and not a *different degree* of the same order; and the work of a *deacon*, being chiefly to attend the temporal affairs of the church in serving tables, has very little tendency to a preparation for the office of the ministry, which is of a spiritual nature, as it principally lies in persons "continually giving themselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," (*Acts vi. 2. 3. 4.*) accordingly the learned Dr Owen conjectures, that

this *good degree*, (*ἀξίωμα*) which signifies a *step*, or a *seat* a little exalted in an assembly, to hear or speak, alludes to the custom of sitting in the Jewish synagogues, which had some seats raised above others for persons to sit in, according to their dignity; and so it may metaphorically signify some place of eminence in a church-assembly, which is due to such as have used the office of a deacon well; where, with boldness and confidence, they may assist in the management of the affairs of the church, as this belongs to a profession of the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (See the Doctor's true nature of a gospel-church, pag. 186, 187.)

17 long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

being detained longer from you than may be expected, I send this letter, to shew how you ought to conduct yourself in what relates to the house, which God has built for himself, and is the sole proprietor of; not an house made with hands, like that which he caused to be built to his own name at *Jerusalem*, (1 Kings viii. 19.) much less like the temples that heathens have erected to their lifeless idols; but an house of a spiritual nature, consisting of credible professors of Christ's name, who, as lively stones built together, (1 Pet. ii. 5.) make up the church of the only living and true God, which he animates by his spirit, and in which he dwells after a more excellent manner than he ever did in the temple of *Solomon* itself, though he filled *that* with a glory: (1 Kings viii. 10.) The strength, ornament, and safety of this church is altogether spiritual, of a different, and incomparably nobler kind, than any pillar and basis of a material temple can be †. It is the found truth of the gospel, of which Christ is the sum and substance, and which you and all faithful pastors are to preach and maintain in all holy ministrations.

16 And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

16 And it must be confessedly owned, (ὁμολογούμενον) that the true doctrine of the gospel, which is according to godliness, (chap. vi. 3.) is a great, glorious, and incomprehensible mystery, (see the note on 1 Cor. ii. 7.) ; some of the principal articles of which are these, namely, That the eternal Son of God, who is strictly and properly God, together with the Father and Spirit, even God over all blessed for ever, (John i. 14. and Rom. ix. 5.) was manifested, for the most important purposes of redemption and salvation, in his incarnate state; and so was *Immanuel, God with us*: (Mat. i. 21, 23.) And, having satisfied divine justice by his obedience, sufferings, and death, he was publicly acquitted and

#### N O T E S.

† The pillar and ground of truth is referred by some to the church, and by others to Timothy and gospel-ministers. But the truth of the gospel is more properly the pillar and ground of the church, than the church is of the truth, and the church cannot possibly be the pillar of truth any otherwise, than as it holds forth and maintains the truth, which itself is built upon; and tho' the apostles are called pillars, Gal. ii. 9. yet they cannot be said to be so in their own persons, but only as in their ministrations they supported the gospel-doctrine concerning Christ; as the foundation of the church, 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. which, on that account, is called "the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

"Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone," (Ephes. ii. 10.); and the doctrine of Peter's confession, or Christ, whom he confessed is called "the rock, on which he would build his church," (Mat. xvi. 18, see the note there.) It therefore seems to me that, in opposition to the pillars and foundation of a material temple, which is here alluded to, the truth of the gospel, or Christ as exhibited in the gospel, is meant by the pillar and ground of truth: on which the church stands, as its foundation and supports accordingly this truth is spoken of under the appellation of the mystery of godliness; and several articles of it are specified in the following verse.

and accepted of God, as the righteous head of the church, and was cleared of all the vile reproaches of his enemies, in his resurrection, by a concurrence of the Holy Spirit, with his own power, as a divine person, (see the note on *Rom. i. 4.*) ; and so he was raised again for our justification from all the offences for which he was delivered to death, (*Rom. iv. 25.*) He was after that seen of angels, and honourably witnessed unto in his ascension, (*Acts i. 10.*) vast multitudes of which surrounded him, as his adoring servants and courtiers, in his triumphal entrance into heaven, (*Pf. lxxviii. 17.*) And, in consequence of all this, he was preached, as the atoning, risen, and exalted Saviour, to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*; and was believed on by abundantly more *Gentiles* than *Jews*\*; and so was received in a glorious manner by them, who flock'd in crowds to him, under the glorious dispensation of the Spirit, which he shed down abundantly from on high; and they were wrought upon to embrace him with alacrity and joy, and to make an open and honourable profession of him in all the glory of his person, mediation, and exaltation.

## N O T E

\* Various have been the laboured interpretations of the several clauses in this verse, and attempts to range them all in a consistent order of time, which I think ought to be attended to: but none, that I have been able to consult, have given me satisfaction in making both the sense and order agree: The greatest difficulty lyes in giving such an account of "justified in the spirit, seen of angels, and received up to glory," as may be adjusted to a regular succession of the other intervening events here recited. All these passages therefore are paraphrased in such a manner, as I apprehend to be just, and fully to comport with the due order in which they stand. I suppose the chief objection, by many at least, will be made against the construction here given of *received up into glory*, which my thoughts had turned to before I saw those of Dr Baynes's friend upon it, some part of which surprisingly fell in with, and helped to confirm my own. His words, as quoted by the Dr in his note on this place, so far as they are to my purpose, are these, "If this be the true sense of *ανηγειρεν εν δόξῃ* (i. e.) *was gloriously received*, the order of the several articles may be very just; for, upon our Lord's being preached unto the Gentiles, he was believed on in the world, and met with a glorious reception: For what multitudes in the apostolic age abra-

ced the Christian religion? And in favour of this interpretation it may be observed that *ανηγειρεν* does frequently signify *was received*, without denoting any thing of ascending or descending. See *Acts xx. 13, 14.* and *xxiii. 31.* *Ephes. vi. 13.* 2 *Tim. iv. 11.*" to which I would add, that (*δουξεν*) *in glory*, signifies and is rendered *glorious*, 2 *Cor. iii. 9, 8, 11.* and *riches in glory* (*εὐδαιμον*) signifies *glorious riches*, *Phil. iv. 19.* It is well known that the preposition (*εν*) *in*, very often signifies, and is rendered *with*, as in *Matt. iii. 11.* *Mark i. 23.* *Luke iv. 31.* 1 *Cor. ii. 4.* *Ephes. vi. 2.* and many other places; so that *in glory* might more justly be rendered *with glory*, than *into glory*: And *justified in the spirit* seems plainly to relate to the signal testimony which the Holy Spirit gave to our blessed Lord, in raising him from the dead, as a just or righteous person, who, having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and satisfied divine justice, as the substance of his people, ought no longer to be detained under the power of death: For, otherwise the resurrection of Christ is left out of this great mystery of godliness, though it is one of the most remarkable and important branches of it: and this is here placed between his being "manifested in the flesh, and seen of angels", when they attended him, as a grand retinue, in his ascension to glory.

## R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

What a high esteem should we have of the churches which God has erected in our world! churches, which he, as the living God, animates by his Spirit, and dwells in as in his own house. What suitable officers has he appointed to attend their spiritual and temporal concerns! And what admirable directions has he given about them, that none unqualified may be chosen to such important stations, and none may misbehave in them! How good and honourable, and yet laborious a work is it, to have a pastoral oversight of souls, and their spiritual concerns! But how many are the excellent qualifications necessary for it! Persons called to this office ought to be skilful in the work of righteousness, fit to teach others, and not raw upstarts, lest they be puffed up with pride, which was the sin and ruin of the devil: They are to be men of blameless morals, of prudence, faithfulness and gravity, generosity and affability, in every relation of life; keeping the families and children under their care in good order, and governing their own passions and appetites, tongues and hands, with moderation and decency, lest they fall into reproach, and Satan and his emissaries take an advantage against them. And in how many things should deacons, together with their wives, copy after them! officers of this sort, who have the care of the temporal concerns of the church, should hold the mystery of faith in a good conscience, and be very exact in their morals: And the more diligent, faithful, prudent, and compassionate they are in discharging the duties of their trust, the higher honour and esteem they will rise to in the church, and the more courageous will they grow in the profession of their faith in Christ. Happy souls, that are enabled to act up to all these characters and duties, in their respective stations! But how careful should they be that the church may not sink for want of having the truth of the gospel for its foundation and support! O the unfathomable depth, importance, and glory of the great mystery of godliness, as it shines forth in God manifested in the flesh to make atonement for sin; raised from the dead for the justification of his person and cause, and of believers in him; beheld, witnessed to, and adored by the holy angels in his ascension to heaven; preached with wide extent to the *Gentile*-world; and believed on by multitudes of them, who received him in a glorious manner, suitable to his own exaltation, as God-man mediator on his throne!

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle informs Timothy, by the spirit of prophecy, of departures from the faith in various instances, that began already to appear, and would issue in the grand apostasy of after-times, 1,—5. And, with reference thereunto, gives him several directions, with suitable motives to enforce them, for a due discharge of the duties of his office, 6,—16.*

## T E X T.

**N**OW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

## P A R A P H R A S E.

**N**OW to caution you and all others, whether ministers, or Christians of every character, against certain gross errors, which in opposition to the glorious *mystery of godliness*, (chap. iii. 16.) will be a *mystery of iniquity*, (2 Thess. ii. 7.) and which begins already to work, and will hereafter have a much wider, and more terrible spread: It is proper to acquaint you, that the Spirit of God foretells in the inspired writings\*, and most

## N O T E.

\* The Spirit says expressly. Mr Joseph (chap. xvi. p. 521. &c. of his works) supposes this to refer to what is written, *David*

most expressly and clearly by immediate revelation to me, that in a future time of this last age, or dispensation of God toward the church †, there will arise many false professors of Christianity, that will apostatize (αποστασιναι) from the pure doctrines of faith, as contained in the gospel; and will attend to persons of an intriguing temper, under the influence of infernal spirits §; and so will be misled into the idolatrous principles and practices of worshipping angels and departed saints, in such a manner, as very nearly resembles the religious honours which are paid by heathens to their demons, whom they worship, as mediators between their superior gods and themselves.

3 Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

2 The methods that these seducers will take to draw many into their own pernicious errors, will be, by uttering abundance of falsehoods to delude them, and establish their own authority, under hypocritical pretences of zeal for religion; and they will not stick at any iniquitous

#### N O T E S.

21. 36: others take it to refer to our Lord's predictions of "many false prophets, that † should arise, and deceive many." (Mat. xxiv. 11.) But as the apostle had so clearly and expressly wrote upon this point in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, (chap. ii.) before he sent this epistle to Timothy. Why may we not understand him to mean that the Spirit had in an immediate manner revealed it to him, and there, as well as here, spoke of it by him?

† "In the latter times" (ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς) signifies in the last dispensation of God under the Messiah's reign; so that any period, within the compass of this last age, may properly be said to be "in the latter times." And though there were some beginnings of apostacy in the apostle's days that tended to the grand one, as may be gathered from 2 Thess. ii. 7.: yet what he had principally in view was, I think, to come to pass in some ages after that time, as may appear from what he adds 2 Thess. ii. 1.—11. It was nevertheless proper for Timothy to know, and give notice of this apostacy to the Christians of his day, that they might be the better guarded against every thing of that aspect; because corruptions of this tendency began already to work in Judaizers, who were for keeping up the distinction of meats, and a show of humility; were for worshipping of angels, and embracing other errors that were broached by false apostles, and deceitful workers; an account of which is given at large in Dr Whirby's note on this text. But we cannot justly infer from thence, as the Doctor would, that the apostle had not a further eye upon a still more flagrant

and general apostacy; since notwithstanding all the Doctor's laboured, and seemingly forced attempts to the contrary, the apostle plainly points to this in these passages of the second epistle to the Thessalonians above referred to, and since he wrote for the use of the church in all succeeding generations.

§ The spirit, principles and practices of the antichristian church of Rome so exactly match with the description given in this and the two next verses, of these seducers, and their corruptions, that any one may easily read their character in it: For they have most notoriously apostatized from the primitive faith of the gospel: Their doctrine of worshipping angels and departed saints, and making use of them as mediators, is apparently the doctrine of Demons, in the nearest affinity to that, which was found among the heathens; their methods of propagating their religion, by spurious legends, forged miracles, and fabulous stories, under hypocritical pretences of zeal for God, while interest is their principal aim; their astonishing hardness, and inflexibility of any moral evil, in the most vile, criminal, and murderous methods for extirpating what they call heresy, and serving the church; their forbidding priests, monks, and nuns to marry, and enjoining abstinence from flesh in Lent, and on Wednesdays and Fridays, all the year round, so evidently answer the apostle's distinguishing characters of their apostacy, that there need no plainer marks to warrant an application of them to that antichristian-church. (See also the notes on 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. and 2 Tim. iii. 1.

quitous measures to carry on and effect their own corrupt designs; their consciences being as insensible of good and evil, and of the dreadful consequences of their guilt, as flesh, that is seared with a hot iron, becomes callous and incapable of feeling.

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

3 Some of the errors which they will vent and propagate are, prohibiting marriage to some sorts of persons, and so disannulling the order of the God of nature, and exposing them to all temptations of unchastity; as also obliging people to abstain from some kinds of food, which God created for the sustenance of man, and now, under the gospel-dispensation, (which has taken away all former legal distinctions of clean and unclean meats) allows all sorts of wholesome flesh to be eaten, with moderation and sobriety, at all times, as occasions require, with thankfulness to him, for providing them, and for allowing all Christians to eat of them with a covenant-right, who believe the truth as it is in Jesus, and understand and make a conscientious prudent use of the gospel-doctrine of Christian liberty, as to that point.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

4 For every creature that God has made, is in itself good, as it came out of his hand for the purposes for which he created it; and nothing that is proper for food is to be scrupled or forbidden, provided it be received with religious gratitude and acknowledgments of God as the author and giver of it.

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

5 For it is sanctified to our lawful use by the gospel of the ever blessed God, which has taken away all ceremonial uncleanness from it; as also by his commanding a blessing upon it, (*Mat. iv. 4.*) and by prayer, according to the laudable custom at meals to implore his blessing upon it for the refreshment of animal nature, that it may be fitted for his service; and after the refreshment to bless the Lord for it, (*Deut. viii. 10.* and see the note on *Mat. xiv. 19.*)

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

6 If you, my dear son, in the faith, shall carefully from time to time remind, and warn, the Christian brethren of all the things before-mentioned, and particularly of this grand apostacy, some tendencies to which already appear, (see the two last notes on *ver. 1.*) that they may be the more upon their watch, and guard against every, the least approach to it, you will acquit yourself with honour, as a useful, wise, and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, that has his glory at heart, and will order your ministrations suitable to the circumstances of the times, and the present danger of errors and corruptions creeping into the church; and will

will therein approve yourself to have been well taught, refreshed, and strengthened in your own soul, as having thoroughly digested the pure doctrines of faith in Christ, and of every other evangelical truth that is connected with it; the knowledge and experience of which you have sought after, and happily attained. (*παρηκολούθησας*) (See the note on *Luke* i. 3.)

7 But refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.

7 But as to the fabulous traditions of the *Jews*, and their endless genealogies, which I have already cautioned against, as tending to corrupt the simplicity of the gospel, rather than to godly edifying, (*chap.* i. 4-) and which are indeed as foolish as the idle stories that old women delight to tell children, pay no manner of regard to these; reject and have nothing to do with them; but like athletics in the *Grecian* games, (*γυμνασία*) exert yourself with the utmost labour, diligence, and vigour, in promoting the doctrines and duties of true piety to God through Jesus Christ, and in exemplifying the beauties of practical godliness in your own life and conversation.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

8 For (*γυμνασία*) the greatest pains that can be taken in mere external acts of religion, in which the body only is engaged, is little worth, neither pleasing to God, nor of any good account of man's own soul. (*Mat.* xv. 8, 9-) But evangelical, vital, and practical godliness, in heart, and life, is every way advantageous, with regard to all things that concern us; there being express promises, even under the gospel-state, (*chap.* ii. 15. *Mat.* vi. 25,—31. *Rom.* viii. 28: and *Phil.* iv. 19.) of the blessing of God, as annexed to it, in what relates to the necessities, conveniences, and a sanctified use of all circumstances of this present life; and still more excellent and abundant promises, relating to the glory and blessedness of the better world to come: Yea, *this is emphatically the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life,* (1 *John* ii. 25.)

9 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

9 This promise, with all the rest, may be fully depended upon, as a certain truth, which God in faithfulness will make good, and it is worthy the highest regard, esteem, and entertainment, as a rich encouragement to serve the Lord, and cleave to him, amidst all difficulties, oppositions, and dangers; how many soever apostatize from him,

10 For therefore we both labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all

10 For it is in consideration of this important truth, and of the assured hopes of its accomplishment to ourselves, that we the apostles and servants of Christ, undergo great fatigues in our holy ministrations to advance his glory, interest, and kingdom, and gain souls to him;



all men, especially of those that believe.

him; and that we patiently and cheerfully bear the most contemptuous scorn, and infamous revilings, from our adversaries, for his sake; because we firmly rely on the power, truth, and faithfulness of the Almighty and ever living God, who has life in himself, and is the fountain of both natural and spiritual life, and of every blessing that is needful for the support and comfort of either of them, as he is the great Preserver of all mankind, and the author and giver of all their temporal salvations and deliverances, and in a providential way, is good to all, (*Pf. cxlv. 9.*) and he is so, by the particular care of his providence, and in a special way of covenant-love and faithfulness to true believers, with respect to all the promised good things that pertain to the present life; as well as is most eminently so, with respect to an everlasting salvation, in that which is to come, (*ver. 8.*)

11 These things command and teach.

11 These things are of such vast consequence to the encouragement of faith and holiness, that I would have you inculcate them, by divine authority, upon the consciences of your hearers; and illustrate and explain them at large, in the course of your ministry, that they may see the excellence and advantage of true religion and godliness.

12 Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity.

12 Let it be your study and endeavour, by divine grace, to acquit yourself herein with such diligence, gravity, good judgment, prudence, and fidelity to your trust, and with such evidence of your own heartily believing esteeming, and living under the power of what you preach to others, that none may have occasion to slight, and condemn you and your admonitions, your office, or your management of it, on account of your youth: But, the more effectually to prevent this, let it be your great concern, that you yourself may be an amiable and shining example to all other believers, in the excellency of your doctrine and edifying discourse; in the regularity of your religious and moral behaviour; in the sincerity and ardour of your love to God and Christ and immortal souls, to truth and holiness, and to all fellow-ministers and Christians; in your spiritual-mindedness, fervent zeal for the glory of God, and aboundings in all the fruits of the Spirit; in the steady and lively exercise and profession of your faith, and maintaining the doctrines of it; and in all (*εὐνομία*) chastity and purity of heart and life.

13 Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

13 You may have still further directions from me by word of mouth, when, according to my hope, (*chap. iii. 14.*) I may have an opportunity of seeing you. In the

the mean while, attend to your charge, as you ought to do all the days of your life; and that you may in the best manner fulfil it, addict yourself to, and spend much of your time in reading, as well as praying over, the holy scriptures of the Old Testament, and this epistle, together with all other inspired writings of the New Testament, that are extant, for the improvement of your own soul, in knowledge and spiritual gifts, grace, and comfort, and further fitting you for public service: And as in this way you should lay in, so I would have you lay out your stock of Christian-knowledge and experience, by exhorting and comforting others, and spreading sound doctrine among them, for their conversion, edification, and establishment.

13 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

14 And as God has richly furnished you with extraordinary gifts for this service, Take heed that you do not neglect, to stir them up, and to exercise and improve them to the best advantage, which were abundantly conferred upon you for preaching the gospel, and fulfilling the whole of your ministry, according to the remarkable prophecies that have been delivered by some inspired men of late concerning you, (*chap. i. 18.*) and which were communicated to you, particularly at your ordination; as a signal of which, I and other elders, who joined with me in that solemnity, laid our hands upon you. (*2 Tim. i. 6.*)

15 Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all,

15 Let the things that I have been mentioning, as the subject of your ministry and rule of conduct, and what I have now been saying about reading the scriptures, and the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which you are favoured with, be frequently and seriously reflected upon, to affect your own heart with them, and to excite your diligence in improving them; and meditate closely and seriously upon the holy scriptures, as well as read them: Let your attention to these things, and your ministrations of them, and prayer for a blessing upon them, be the entire business of your life, without entangling yourself with the affairs of this world, (*2 Tim. ii. 4.*) And (*in Greek words*) let your whole soul be in them, as in your proper sphere and delightful element, that your proficiency in wisdom, gifts, and grace, and in experience of God's being with you, may evidently appear, in all things, to all about you.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them

16 In the first place, Be very careful in what concerns yourself, as a minister and Christian. See to it, that you and your services be accepted of God in Christ; that your heart be right with him, as to its principles, frame, and temper, motives and ends; that your gifts be

them that hear  
there.

be duly cultivated; and that the whole of your behaviour toward God, yourself, and others, be well-pleasing in his sight: And then take heed what doctrine you preach, and how you preach it, that it be sound and clear, according to the word of God, important and seasonable, evangelical and practical; and that it will be well explained, confirmed, defended, and improved various ways, as occasions require, and your subject leads you: And persist steadfastly in the practice of all this, as your proper and stated work to the end of your days: For in so doing, and by means thereof, you, under the influence of the blessed Spirit, will be instrumental to the final salvation of your own soul, and the souls of many that attend your ministry, and hear with the obedience of faith.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

It is melancholy to think of the woful apostacies from the faith of the gospel, that have been in all ages; but it needs not seem strange to us, since they were foretold by the spirit of prophecy: And how plainly has it pointed out the seducing hypocritical arts of falshood and deceit, that are used, without shame or conscience, by the apostate church of *Rome*, together with their worshipping of deified saints, forbidding marriages, and enjoining abstinence from meats, which God created, and allows under the gospel-dispensation to be moderately used, with thanksgiving for them, and prayer for his blessing upon them! With what contempt should we reject the errors that are built upon uncertain traditions, as we would fable stories that are told to please children! And instead of resisting in formal bodily services, that turn to no good account, how concerned should we be to live in the practice of vital religion, which has a gracious entail of blessings upon it, by the promise of God! He, as a bountiful benefactor, affords temporal preservations, deliverances and mercies to mankind in general; and by the particular care of his providence, as a covenant-God, he gives them all in a way of special love, and completes them in eternal salvation, to every true believer: What important truths are these, and how worthy of the most hearty entertainment! With what care should ministers inculcate them on those that are under their charge, for their caution on the one hand, and encouragement on the other; humbly trusting in the ever-living God, for their own support and comfort, amidst all the reproaches, difficulties and labours they undergo for Christ's sake! And while, together with this, they are exemplary in faith, love and all holiness, they will approve themselves as good ministers of Jesus Christ, and good proficients in the doctrine and grace of faith: But, in order hereunto, how much diligence ought they to use in studying, reading, and improving the gifts God has bestowed upon them; and in giving themselves entirely to these exercises, and to preaching and prayer! And what need have they to take heed first to their own state, temper and conversation; and then to their own doctrine, with perseverance therein, as the means of God's appointing and blessing, for the final salvation of their own souls, and the souls of their hearers!

### C H A P. V.

*The apostle gives orders how to behave towards elder, and younger men and women, 1, 2. And toward poor widows, 3,—8. Describes the characters of such widows, as are, or are not, proper to be maintained*

by the church, and taken into its service, 9,—16. Shews the respect that is to be paid to those that are elders by office, 17,—19. But charges Timothy to take due care in rebuking offenders of all ranks and stations, in ordaining ministers, and in using such moderate refreshments, as were necessary for his own weak state of health, 20,—25.

## TEXT.

**R**ebuke not an elder, but treat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren :

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**S you, my son *Timothy*, are a young man, (*chap. iv. 12.*) who ought, as such, to behave with the utmost prudence and decency, to screen you from contempt on account of your youth; and as the heavy head is a crown of glory, if it be found in a way of righteousness, (*Prov. xvi. 31*) I would advise you to take care, that whatever sinful infirmities attend any ancient Christian †, you do not assume an air of haughty, magisterial and severe authority in reproving one of such venerable years; (and the same may be observed much more, with respect to one that bears the office of an elder in the church.) But treat him with honour and respect in your converses with him, (*Lev. xix. 32.*) and deliver your exhortations to him, rather in a way of earnest intreaty to depart from all iniquity, with a due difference to his age and standing, such as you would show, in like cases, to your own father himself after the flesh: And let young men, that are more on a level, as to years, with yourself, and need reproof, be dealt with in a more free, and yet meek, affable and affectionate manner, as you would treat your own brethren in nature, as well as in grace.

1 The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.

2 In like manner behave toward godly women advanced in years, with such a sort of reverence, even when you would correct any fault in them, as is due from children to their own mothers: And manage your admonitions of young women that profess Christianity, as you would in giving them to your own sisters; and be sure let it be with such modesty and chastity in your looks, speech, and behaviour, as shall give no occasion of reproach to your own, or her character.

3 Honour widows

3 As to believing women that are poor widows, and, upright

## N O T E.

† An elder here seems most directly to mean, not one that is so by office, as it does, *ver. 17*; but old or elderly men. For it is in this place opposed, not to private members of the church, but to young men, as elderly women also are to the younger in the next verse: And yet as, in the reason of things, they that are elders by office are to be treated in as respectful a manner, at least, as is here directed, we may very well include

them. But the rebuke here intended seems to relate to the lesser infirmities that older and younger Christians are liable to, rather than to infamous and notorious crimes. For, whatsoever a person's age or station be, *Timothy* was solemnly charged publicly to rebuke such sinners, *ver. 20*; and yet, even in this case, a prudent decency was doubtless to be exercised in reproving them, suitable to their years and stations in the church.

dows that are widows indeed.

as such, are apt to think themselves the more neglected and imposed upon, pay all becoming respect to them, and take care that they be honourably provided for by the church \*, if they are indeed desolate, according to the strongest sense of that term, as not only bereaved of their husbands, but also destitute of any near of kin that are able and willing to support them.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

4 But if any religious widows have children or grandchildren, (*κατα*) that are capable of assisting them, and supplying their necessities; Let such of their descendants be taught (as they ought to learn) their duty toward their parents, according to our Lord's instructions. (*Mark* vii. 10,—12.) and toward God therein, who has commanded them to honour their *mothers* as well as their fathers, (*Ex.* xx. 12.) in conscientiously doing all they can to shew a reverence of them, and provide for such of them as need their help; and so make them the most grateful returns for all their trouble, tenderness, care and pains, love and solicitude, kindness and expence, in bringing them up, and conducting them through all the exercising follies and dangers of their childhood and youth, till they settled them in the world: For such a behaviour toward them is in itself just and equitable, worthy and honourable (*καλον*) and is highly pleasing in the sight of God, who has fixed the relation, and the duties of it, between parents and children.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

5 Now a widow *indeed*, that is a proper object of the church's charity, is one who, being in indigent circumstances, destitute of relations to relieve her, trusts in the Lord to take care of her for time, as well as eternity, and to supply her with needful things, and is one who, with an habitually religious disposition, continues morning and evening, and frequently on all occasions, to offer up her humble addresses to God in earnest petitions and pleas, according to her faith in his providence, for whatsoever he sees to be best for her.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is

6 But the widow that gives herself up to a jovial, loose and voluptuous way of living, under the power of

#### N O T E.

\* It appears from ver. 4. and 8. that the *honour* here meant relates to the *allowance*, which was to be made to these widows of things needful and convenient for their subsistence; and the word is used in the same sense, ver. 17. as is evident from what follows in that and this next verse, (see the note there); accordingly our Lord, speaking of the corrupt traditions of the *Jews*, which discharged children from contributing to the

support of their poor parents, in case they had devoted to God what was necessary for their relief, takes it as a breach of the commandment to "honour their father and mother," *Mat.* xv. 4, 5, 6. and *Mark* vii. 10,—13; and the apostle culls the generous benevolence of the people at *Melita*, their *honouring* him and his companions with many *honours*, *Acts* xxviii. 10.

is dead while she liveth.

of carnal inclinations, is in a spiritual sense dead ; dead to God, and *dead in trespasses and sins*, (Ephes. ii. 1.), while in a natural sense she is alive, and lives in wanton pleasure ; and so ought neither to be maintained, nor owned by the church, as any member of their holy body.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

7 And these things are of so great consequence to the moral and religious life, and to the reputation, beauty and order of churches and families, that you ought to declare and solemnly enforce them, in your public ministry and private conversation, to the end that these sorts of people may be so regular in conduct, as not to deserve rebuke (*ὅτι ἀντιπαρὸς ὡσὶν*) for scandalous crimes, and the church may not be blameable for conniving at them, and misapplying their charity.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

8 But if there be any professor of Christ's name that is so very unnatural, as not to do what in him lies, according to his circumstances, to supply the wants of his own near relations, especially of his own aged parents, together with his wife and children, who are the principal and dearest parts of his family ; he has practically renounced the doctrines of Christianity ; and, whatever his pretences be, he really is worse than one that believes nothing of them, as he not only violates the law of nature and humanity, in instances that many heathens themselves would be ashamed of ; but acts directly contrary to divine revelation itself, which enjoins all relative and social duties.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number, under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

9 If there be any poor widow, whose offspring either cannot, or will not relieve her, the church ought to take care of her : But if they have their thoughts upon her, to choose her for an assistant to the deacons †, in visiting and ministering to the poor and sick, especially of the female sex, she ought to be, at least, sixty years old, and free from the scandal of having ever been married

#### N O T E.

† The apostle's insisting on a widow's being " three-score years old, before she be taken into the number," leads us to consider him as speaking here, not merely of taking them into the number of those that were to be maintained by the church, but of those that were also to be employed as *deaconesses* in it : For younger widows might be so poor and infirm, as to be proper objects of the church's charity, though not fit for the office of a deaconess, which, in the early ages of Christianity, might be very convenient, for preventing scandal among heathen neighbours, and relations of such converted women, whether young or old, as on

account of poverty, or sickness, and other occasions, the officers of the church were obliged to be very conversant with ; as well as for performing the family-services of women in attending ministers that usually travelled about to preach the gospel ; or were driven from place to place by persecution ; but, these reasons now ceasing, there is not the like occasion for deaconesses in the present age : And as I do not find any institution of them, or prescription of their duty, as there was of deacons, Acts vi. 1, 2, &c. it appears to me to be matter of mere prudence in the church to commit such offices to women, or not, as circumstances require.

ried to more than one husband at a time, or having causelessly put away her husband, and been married to another. (See Mark x. 12. and the note on chap. iii. 2.)

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

10 She ought also, in order to her being taken into this service, to be a person of good character, for having faithfully and prudently discharged the relative duties of the married life; as for instance, If she has behaved well in religiously educating children, or in hospitably receiving, and treating such godly strangers, whether ministers or others, as providence has cast in her way; if she has been ready to do the meanest offices, for the refreshment of such holy persons, even to the washing of their feet, as is customary in these hot countries, after travelling in sandals; If she has ministered, with compassion and tenderness, by counsel, or otherwise, to Christians in any sort of affliction; in a word; if, in the general course of her life, she has laboured, with care and diligence, to perform every good office toward God and others, as opportunity offered, she then may be well admitted, not only to partake of the charity of the church, but to do the part of a deaconess in it.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for, when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

11 But, if younger widows would desire to be admitted to such a station, it would be most prudent not to encourage, but to reject such a motion: For when once (*καταρτισαυσι*) they have begun (as there may be danger of it) to grow voluptuous and lascivious, contrary to their profession of Christ, and to consult their own ease and pleasure, instead of his honour and service, they will be tempted to marry at any rate, though it be into a heathen family, that they may get rid of their irksome restraints and labours, in attending the religious poor.

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

12 And they will expose themselves to shame and condemnation in the eyes of the world, to the censure of the church, and to the righteous judgments of God here, (see the note on 1 Cor. xi. 29.) as well as to eternal damnation hereafter; because they rejected their former profession of faith in Christ, or renounced the doctrine which they at first notionally believed concerning him; and deserted the trust committed to them.

13 And whilst they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

13 And, together with these, such young widows as are more addicted to pleasure than business, soon contract a habit of idleness, and trifle away their time in gadding about from one house to another, for amusement and diversion; nor do they only grow lazy creatures, but also impertinent, stirring, loose, and foolish talkers,

talkers, and officious pryers, and intruders into other people's affairs, which do not belong to them, that they may carry stories about, whether right or wrong, and make their own remarks upon them, to please some, and expose others; which ought by no means to be done, but is very mischievous to the reputation and peace of their neighbours and acquaintance.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

14 Instead therefore of younger widows being admitted to any place of service in the church\*, I would rather advise, that they be left in such a situation, as admits of their marrying in the Lord, if they be so disposed, and have a good offer, that promises fair for a comfortable maintenance; and that, having entered into that relation, they breed, nourish, and religiously educate such children as it may please God to give them; and, being mistresses of families, may conduct their household-affairs with faithfulness, prudence and good housewifry, and behave with such diligence, sobriety, and modesty, in all the duties of their relation, as to give no advantage to any enemies of Christ, that seek, and would gladly take it, to speak evil of them, and of him and religion on their account.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

15 I speak so particularly about this; because there are instances of some young widows already, who have turned off from their profession of Christ, and followed the devices of Satan in such sinful practices as have just now been mentioned. (*ver.* 11, 12, 13.)

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

16 But to return to the case of poor aged widows, If any Christian man or woman have ancient needy mothers or grandmothers, (*ver.* 4.) whose husbands are dead, such offspring of theirs, whether sons or daughters, ought to supply their wants, in the best manner that their own circumstances admit of; and if they can relieve them at their own expence, the maintaining of such widows ought not to be thrown upon the church, which should be excused from it, that they may have the more to spare for the help and comfort of those that are indeed desolate widows, as having none of their own family to provide for them.

17 And

#### N O T E

\* The younger women seem to me to refer to young widows, who are all along the subject of the three preceding verses; and so it carries an intimation of the lawfulness of these, as well as other young women's marrying, if there be no other circumstance to forbid it: But it is not to be imagined, that when the apostle says, "I will that they marry, and bear children," he meant to oblige them to marry, any more than to

bear children, whether they were inclined to the one, and had a proper opportunity for it; or whether God should bless them with the other or not: His advice to 'virgins,' 1 Cor. vii. 34, &c. is directly contrary to any such injunction; but what he here would suggest is, that they ought to be at liberty, and that it would be more proper for them to marry, &c. than to be a burden to the church, or put into the office of a deaconess.



17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

17 And now I am speaking about the use of the church's stock, I would recommend the paying a due regard to such elders as by office are employed in the spiritual services of the church, that they who are prudent and faithful in presiding over them, (or *καὶ οὐκ ἀποστολικοί*) may stand high in their civil respect and esteem, and may have liberal allowances, sufficient to make their worldly circumstances easy, reputable, and comfortable\*; especially those of them that are eminent and remarkably laborious in studying and preaching the gospel, and in spreading, maintaining, and defending its pure unmixed doctrines: Let these be honourably maintained with double liberality, beyond such allowances as are to be granted to poor widows, (ver. 3.) according to their superior, and more important stations and work in the church, for the service of whose souls they spend their time and pains.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The

18 For as this is equitable in itself; so the scripture points it out as your duty, where it says, to intimate the reward that is due to the servants of the Lord for their most important labours, (see the note on 1 Cor. ix.

#### N O T E.

\* As honour includes maintenance, (see the note on ver. 3.) double honour seems to signify "great civil respect, and liberal maintenance," the last of which is referred to in the next verse, and the first in the verse that follows it. This honour the apostle orders to be paid to the "elders that rule well, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," by which some think, that *ruling elders* are distinguished from pastors or *preaching elders*, as different officers in the church. But it is, at least, very doubtful, whether such a conclusion can be drawn from this text: For not only the elders, "that laboured in the word and doctrine," but the elders also, *that ruled well*, were to be deemed worthy of the honour of maintenance, as appears from the next verse. Now I can hardly believe that these elders, (who are supposed to be engaged only in the rule and government of the church) any more than its *deacons*, were to be maintained at the church's cost in their lay-capacity, which left them at full liberty to pursue the business of their secular callings, for their own and families subsistence. And the reason, which the apostle subjoins in the following verse, why *elders* ought to be maintained by the church, certainly relates to none but *preaching elders*: Nor do I recollect that orders are ever given, in any other part of scripture, for the maintenance of either *deacons* or those supposed ruling and non-preaching elders or that an obligation can be inferred

from any passage of the New Testament, that churches should be furnished with such sort of officers, though perhaps prudence, in some circumstances of affairs, may make them expedient. I therefore incline to think, with some others, that the apostle intends only *preaching elders*, when he directs *double honour* to be paid to the "elders that rule well, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine;" and that the distinction lies, not in the order of officers, but in the degree of their diligence, faithfulness, and eminence, in *laboriously* fulfilling their ministerial work to the edification of the church; and so the emphasis is to be laid on the word *LABOUR* in the word and doctrine, which has an especially annexed to it. Accordingly the learned Mr Joseph Mede observes, that *to labour* (*καταλίσκειν*) signifies, not simply to labour, but "to labour with much travail and toil," which he supposes refers to the evangelists or prophets, that travelled up and down to preach the gospel; because their pains were more than theirs that were fixed elders of certain churches: He also gives us another exposition, grounded on the use of the participle in the Greek, (*καταλίσκει*) which is often wont to note the reason of a thing thus, Let elders that rule, or govern their flocks well, be counted worthy of double honour, and that *chiefly* because, or in respect of their labour in the word and doctrine. (See book i. discourse 19. vol. i. pag. 92 of his works.)

The labourer is worthy of his reward.

ix. 10.) *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn:* And our blessed Lord himself says, with respect to his ministering servants, (*Mat. x. 10.*) *The workman is worthy of his meat, as his reasonable reward.*

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

19 Another part of the honour, (*ver. 17.*) which is to be shown to these elders, is, that, considering their high post in the church, and the great consequence of supporting their character, in order to their usefulness, No accusation of any crime be admitted or believed, and brought into the church against any one of them; unless it be first substantially proved by, at least, two or three credible witnesses, which are required even in ordinary cases, (*Deut. xix. 15. Mat. xviii. 16.*); and it ought to be deposed in the presence of the like number of its members, to judge of the credibility of what is alledged against him, before the church takes any cognisance of it.

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

20 But if, upon undeniable proof, elders themselves be found guilty of enormous crimes, inconsistent with their sacred character; In that case, there is to be no such respect of persons, as to connive at their faults; but you, as an evangelist, ought to reprove them, as well as any other member, for their sin, with all becoming authority, in the presence of the whole church, that not only they may reject them, in case of obstinacy and impenitence; but that others also, as well as these persons themselves, may be afraid of doing any iniquity for time to come.

21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

21 As these are things of vast moment for preserving the purity and prosperity of the church, and relate to the most difficult, grievous, and irksome part of your work; and as your youth may make you the more backward to engage in it, I solemnly bind it upon your conscience, as in the presence of the all-seeing and heart-searching God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great head of the church, who knows all things, and searches the heart and reins, (*Rev. ii. 23.*) and will judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom, (*2 Tim. iv. 1.*); and as in the presence of the blessed angels; who, continually surrounding us, are witnesses of what I say, and whom, in distinction from the fallen angels, God has chosen to be his favourite servants, and to be everlastingly confirmed in their holy and happy state\*: Yea, I charge you,

N O T E.

\* In whatever sense we understand this charge, as given before the elect angels, it relates to them, not as judges, but as witnesses, and is considered in the paraphrase both as given

you, as you hope to appear with comfort before all these, at the great day, when our Lord shall *come in his own, and in his Father's glory, with all the holy angels*, that you carefully take heed to, maintain, and put in practice, the rules I have given you, without preferring one to another, through favour, or affection, or prejudging before the cause is heard and approved; and without the least partiality, through prejudice for, or against any man whatsoever, on account of his station in the church, or of any private consideration to bias your mind.

21 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins: keep thyself pure.

22 And as elders or pastors themselves may be liable to miscarriages, If you would rejoice to have as little occasion as possible, for the disagreeable work of rebuking them, (*ver. 20.*) It behoves you to be very cautious and careful in your inquiries after, and well satisfied about, the characters of such as propose to be introduced into that sacred office, and not hastily, inconsiderately, and rashly lay your hands on any man to ordain him †, with a conveyance of such extraordinary gifts, as used to attend that signal of them: Take heed of acting precipitately and unadvisedly herein, lest you make yourself accessary to, and so be partaker of the guilt of unsound and ungodly ministers: Stand clear of the blame of countenancing such, and of all the sad consequences of their unfaithfulness, errors, and misbehaviour, that you in this, as well as in every other respect, may be *pure from the blood of all men.* (*Acts xx. 26.*)

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.

23 Here, by the way, let me, in the fulness of my heart's concern for you, give you one piece of tender and fatherly advice, relating to your own health, which ought to be consulted for the sake of usefulness, Though you are inclined, and undoubtedly obliged by your office, to be an example of all temperance and sobriety; yet, as your constitution is infirm and sickly, your labours

#### N O T E.

given before them, according to the supposition of their being present in religious assemblies, who are ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation, 1 Cor. xi. 19. Ephes. iii. 10. and Heb. i. 14. and as given to be answered before them at the judgment of the great day; when, for the greater solemnity of it, Christ will come with all the holy angels, as his glorious attendants, Mat. xvi. 27. and xxv. 31. Mark viii. 38. and Luke ix. 26.

† Though conveying the gifts of the Spirit was ordinarily by the apostles laying on

their hands; yet, considering what an extraordinary evangelist Timothy was, according to special foregoing prophecies concerning him, which the apostle takes particular notice of, and seems to lay a great stress upon, once and again, chap. i. 12. and iv. 14. it need not be thought improbable, but that some more remarkably eminent powers were conferred upon him, than upon other evangelists: And why might not this of communicating the gifts of the Spirit at ordination, by laying on of his hands, be one of them?

bours great, and your life very important to the church of Christ, Do not confine yourself any longer, as, thro' too great abstemiousness, you have done in time past, to drink only water; but at proper seasons take a little wine in moderation, as may be needful to help your weak stomach, and decay of appetite and digestion, through the many indispositions and disorders of body that you are often attended with, by means of hard, sturdy, and fatiguing labour; and that threaten soon to put an end to your valuable life and services, for want of animal spirits and proper sustenance.

24 But to return: As to the cautions I have given, (ver. 22.) you are to proceed after a different manner in different cases, according to the evidence and reason of things. For some men's erroneous and sinful principles and practices are so notorious and open to every one's view, that they are thoroughly known before there be any occasion for a strict inquiry to be made into them; and so easily lead the way to a just judgment of what is fit to be done in refusing to introduce them to office in the church: And there are others, who use so much art, secrecy, and hypocrisy, to conceal their sentiments and wickedness, that it often breaks out after a judgment of charity has been past upon them, in order to their being ordained: But whether it does so, or not, you have acquitted your own conscience, whatsoever be the consequence as to them \*

25 There are also some persons whose religious sentiments, gifts, graces, and moral temper and behaviour, are so remarkably good, and obvious to all about them, as to speak for themselves, before there is any need to scrutinize their characters; and they may be justly deemed fit to be admitted to the sacred ministry; in such cases your way is plain: But more caution is to be used as to others, who, tho' gracious upright souls, are so bashful and reclusive in their temper, that it is difficult to form a satisfying judgment about their qualifications; and yet, upon prudent, tender, and close converses with them, that good thing which is wrought in them, and the religion which is more covertly practised by them, may be sufficiently discovered to give you a favourable

#### N O T E.

\* The judgment here intended seems not to be the final day of account, when "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil;" (Eccl. xii. 14.) For there are no sins to be discovered *after*, but all will be made manifest *in* that day: But I rather

think that the judgment here meant is (as the context, ver. 22. directs) to be understood of the judgment, that is to be past, in just and charitable constructions, upon persons characters, with a view to their admission to the sacred office of the ministry.

21 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

yourable opinion of them, and to direct your proceedings toward them in the forementioned case: Or if, after all, you remain doubtful about them, it is best to wait; and if they really be corrupt in principle or practice, it cannot easily be concealed for any length of time.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what veneration should the aged, whether men or women; and with what affability and purity should younger people, be cautioned against every sinful infirmity! The descendants of poor widows ought to treat them with respect, and provide as honourably for them, as they can. How unnatural, and how contrary to all the principles of Christianity, and worse than heathenish is it, for gospel-professors to neglect their destitute parents, and their own families! But if the offspring of poor widows are not able to maintain them, the church to which they belong ought to take them under their care: And if any church needs good matrons to attend their sick and poor, they may appoint such widows of advanced years to that service, as have obtained a good report, and shown a humble compassionate regard to the saints and servants of Christ; but young widows ought not to be put into that office, lest, giving themselves up to pleasure, they become idle, tattling busy-bodies, which are the pests of society; and at length renounce their profession of faith, and following the devices of Satan, throw off religious restraints, to their own condemnation; they are indeed in the worst sense dead, while they live: But as to poor *young* widows of better character, instead of their being burdensome to the church, it may be advisable for them to marry believing husbands, that are capable of maintaining them; and to bear and bring up such children in the fear of the Lord, as he may give them; as also to manage their household business with good housewifry.—How solemn is the charge to all pastors, as well as evangelists, in the presence of God and Christ, and the holy angels, that they faithfully declare these things, and fulfil every part of their office! And though reproofs and censures are the most difficult and grievous duties of their station, yet they are to discharge them with fidelity, and without partiality, whether it be towards church-officers, or toward private members. But with what care and caution should they proceed in ordinations, lest they themselves share with the ordained in their guilt! And O what prudence, tenderness, and courage do they need for conducting, according to the appearances of some people's *sins* on one hand, and *good deeds* on the other, which show themselves before, or after they pass judgment upon them! How arduous, upon the whole, is the ministerial work! And how ought they, that are eminently laborious, in preaching and supporting the pure gospel of Christ, to be honoured with great respect, and liberal maintenance, according to the directions of both the Old and New Testaments! And though they ought to be temperate in all things, they need not confine themselves to drinking water; but may lawfully use wine with moderation for stomach's sake, when their labours and bodily infirmities call for it, and it becomes useful for the preservation of their health, and service in the church.

### C H A P. VI.

*The apostle lays down the duty of Christians toward believing, as well as other masters, which Timothy ought to insist upon, with a severe reproof to Judaizers that taught otherwise, 1,—5. Shews the advantage of godliness with contentment, and the danger of covetous pursuits after riches, 6,—10. Directs Timothy to a contrary course,*

11, 12. Gives him a solemn charge to behave faithfully in a persevering attention to his orders, and in admonishing the rich not to trust in their riches, but in the living God, and to improve his bounties to the best purposes, and repeats his charge with some enlargement, closing all with a short, but comprehensive benediction, 13,—21.

## TEXT.

LET as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed.

## PARAPHRASE.

AS there are some *Judaizers* that would make it unlawful for bond-slaves, upon their becoming Christians, to obey their masters after the flesh \*, Let all converted servants, even though they be under that yoke of servitude, think themselves in conscience bound to pay all civil respect and obedience, that is due to their own masters, whose property they are; and to serve them faithfully, even though they be heathens; by doing otherwise, they would prejudice the minds of their masters against, and bring a scandal upon the name of the blessed God, whom they profess to own and honour as their God, and upon his glorious and holy gospel, as if he had therein discharged them from the just obligations that they were under before, to perform the natural and civil duties of their stations; whereas his true design in it is, to make them better servants than ever, even to sroward masters, (1 Peter ii. 18.)

4 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

2 And those Christian-servants that are so happy as to have believing and faithful masters, ought to prize the privilege, and not contemn them, or make too free with them, or think that they must be sunk, in their civil capacities, down to a level with themselves; and so withdraw their service from them, because they are brethren in Christ, and, as such, are upon a level with themselves in religious privileges, honours, and enjoyments, and in God's account: But let them, on the contrary, be the more cheerful, affectionate, and diligent, in doing the business, and consulting the interest of such masters, for this reason; because they are faithful believers, beloved of God, and of their fellow-Christians, and are partakers of the spiritual blessings of the gospel with themselves, as well as have a right

to

## NOTE.

\* As the Jewish *Kabbies*, thought it unlawful for an *Israelite* to be sold for a servant to heathens (see Dr Lightfoot's Heb. Talmud. Exercit. 1 Cor vii. 21.) it is highly probable from ver. 3. of this chapter, that some *Judaizer* insisted on the same for Christian-converts: but as this would have been to break in upon the civil rights, properties, and possessions, which Christianity

leaves, as it found them, (see the note on Eph. v. 21.) and would have been a strong prejudice in the minds of heathens against embracing the gospel, the apostle takes occasion to lay down the duty of Christian slaves, and therein of all other believing servants, to pay due honour and obedience to their masters, whatsoever their religious character be.

to the benefit of their good and faithful services. (*καὶ οὕτως*.) These are things so important to the credit of religion, and the preservation of natural rights, that I would have you publish and explain them, and exert to the practice of them, on all proper occasions.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

3 If any one pretends to teach notions contrary to this, or to whatsoever else I have been insisting on, (see *chap. i. 3, 10.*) and does not embrace and submit to the sound, uncorrupted and salutary doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, concerning his person and offices, as it hath been delivered in his own ministry, or by his inspired servants, who, as such, preach his word, (*Acts xix. 20.*) If any one do not give his assent and consent to the gospel-doctrine, which contains and enjoins, and is formed, designed and blessed for promoting practical religion, in all devotion toward God, and in all relative duties toward men, on the foot of his authority, and with a good conscience towards him;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife-railings, evil surmises.

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.

4-5 Such a man, be his pretences, profession, or station in the church what they will, is a haughty, self-conceited creature, (*ὕψιστος*) puffed up with the vanity of his own mind, while he knows nothing aright of the truth of the gospel, or of what he ought to know, relating to God, and his own duty; but, like a brain-sick person, is foolishly and madly fond (*ῥαγίζω*) of dealing in impertinent, useless and entangling questions, (*chap. i. 4.*) and going into eager disputes and vain janglings about words, rather than things, in which he himself *neither understands what he says, nor whereof he affirms*, (*chap. i. 6, 7.*) and which are fit for nothing but to kindle and inflame envious and invidious thoughts and passions; angry debates; blasphemous imputations (*ὀνειδισμοί*) and reviling speeches; sinful, injurious and groundless jealousies; preposterously curious, vain and forward bickerings, (*ἡμιμαχίαι*) that are practised and delighted in only by men, whose minds have taken a perverse turn under the power of the reigning corruptions of their own hearts, and who are utter strangers to Christ, and to the truth of the gospel, and the true nature of vital religion; vainly imagining, that what they get most by, for securing and advancing their secular interest, is the best scheme of religion; and therefore they are for making a trade of it, and modeling Christianity itself to their own taste, in a way that may be most subservient to their carnal views. Have nothing to do with such perverse men; reject their principles, practices and conversation; and with-  
draw

draw as far from them as they have withdrawn from truth and holiness.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

6 But whatever men of such corrupt and worldly spirits think of the matter, true religion in heart and life, which keeps up a solemn veneration of God, and an exercise of all suitable graces in worshipping and serving him, through Jesus Christ by the assistance of his Spirit, according to the gospel; this evangelical godliness, together with an entire satisfaction, that gives a sufficiency to the mind itself, (*αὐταρξία*) with regard to such things as we have, and to all disposals of providence relating to the present life, is the best and truest, the most comfortable, and advantageous, and abiding gain for this world and the next, incomparably preferable to all affluence of creature-enjoyments, which at best are empty, precarious, and perishing.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

7 For as we came naked into this world, bringing none of its good things along with us, and hold what we have of them by the free bounty and sovereign disposals of God, who may give or take them as he pleases; so it is unquestionably certain, that we must go out of it naked, as leaving them all behind us, and carrying none of them away with us, when we come to die, (*Job i. 21.*) and it is as certain, that *riches profit not in the day of wrath*, (*Prov. xi. 4.*)

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

8 And if, while we are passing through this world, the good providence of God supplies us with necessary food to sustain us, and clothes and habitations (*αὐτάρκεια*) to cover us, we ought not to be greedily, and ambitiously aspiring after more; but should be thankful for such mercies as we are favoured with, and so well-pleased with them as to think we have enough.

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

9 But they whose hearts are set upon riches, and resolve, if possible, to get them at any rate, as tho' they were their chief good, plunge themselves into the most dangerous temptations to unlawful ways of obtaining, and of using them; and into a dreadful snare to their own souls, which Satan and their carnal hearts lay for them; and into the deep defilement of many foolishly inconsiderate, mad and pernicious appetites and passions, which they ought to be ashamed and afraid of; and which like a great gulf, swallow up such worldly minded men in both temporal and eternal destruction.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which

10 For an inordinate value and affection for wealth is a pregnant source of all sinful, injurious and miserable principles and practices\*, which is sadly exemplified

N O T E.

† Gold begets in brethren hate,  
Gold in families debate;  
Gold does friendship separate,

Gold does civil wars create.

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which while some covered after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

plified in some who, through unvariable desires after the things of this world, have run astray from the truth of the gospel, and their profession of it; and instead of finding the pleasure and advantage they proposed to themselves thereby, they bring distress and ruin upon themselves in soul and body, with as painful agony, in after reflections upon it, as if they had pierced themselves thro' with many sharp and poisonous darts.

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

11 But as for you, O Timothy, who are a man highly favoured of God in the gifts and graces of his Spirit, set apart and devoted, by your own consent, to his service in the work of the ministry, Flee to the remotest distance with utter abhorrence, and with all your might, from these corrupt principles, dispositions, and practices, and every thing of this evil nature and mischievous tendency, as inconsistent with the dignity of your office, and your own happiness and usefulness; and, in opposition thereto, pursue vigorously, in the strength of divine grace, the richest attainments of the knowledge, experience and exercise of righteousness, in all your behaviour toward men; of strict and evangelical piety, in all your actings toward God; of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in God through him, and of releasing views of the heavenly glory; of love to Christ, to the truth, and to his people for his sake; and under the power of these, possess your own soul in patience, amidst all wants and troubles of this world, and sufferings for the gospel's sake, and in an humble, gentle temper towards all men, (*Titus iii. 2.*) in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, (*2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.*) as far as is consistent with being valiant for the truth, which must not be given up through cowardice, or on any terms whatsoever.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

12 In this manner then, contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints; (*Jude, ver. 3.*) Stretch yourself out with holy vehemence and eagerness, (*ἁγροῦ*) as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, (*2 Tim. ii. 3.*) in this good fight against the flesh, the devil and the world, for a good Matter, and in a good cause, which will have a good issue, as engaged in with an exercise of faith to derive strength from him, for it, to support and animate you in it, to carry you through it, and bring you off with victory: press therefore towards the mark for the prize, till, in a way of believing, and of all fidelity, you actually get possession of eternal life; unto the obtaining of which you are called by divine grace, and which is set before you in the gospel for your encouragement under all the hardships

of your present warfare, (see the note on *Phil.* iii. 12.); in your entrance on which, at your ordination, you made a noble confession of your faith in the presence of many witnesses, who attended that solemnity; and you have ever since bore an honourable testimony to it, by preaching and conversation, and by all the sufferings you have patiently endured for it, in the view of numerous spectators, (1 *Cor.* iv. 9.)

12 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession:

13 Now, with an eye to the greatest of all witnesses, of whom it most highly concerns us to be approved, I solemnly charge you in the name, and as it were before the face of the All-seeing and Almighty God, who is the Author of every kind of life; who raises dead souls to spiritual life, and revives them afterwards under all their decays, is the life of all our ministrations, and will raise the dead bodies of all his faithful servants and saints to immortal life and glory: I also charge you, as in the sight and presence of Jesus, the great Messiah, as you will answer to him in the day of judgment, who, when he was arraigned, as an impostor, at the bar of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, bore a free and open testimony to the truth of his own character, (*Mat.* xxvii. 11. and *John* xviii. 27.) though he knew it would cost him his life; and so hath set you a noble example of courage and stedfastness in continuing to maintain the truth of the gospel concerning him, even unto death:

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

14 'Tis in the presence of these divine persons, that I give you this solemn charge to hold fast the ministerial trust committed to you by their command, and to follow the instructions I have given you by their authority, for executing it with all integrity, care and diligence, and in all respects free from blame; *studying to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,* (2 *Tim.* ii. 15) and persevering therein to the end of life, in full expectation and hope of the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, till he shall come to judge the quick and the dead at the last day. (2 *Tim.* iv. 1.)

15 Which in his times he shall shew,

15 Which appearance for this great purpose, he will demonstrate, in its proper and appointed season †, who, is

#### N O T E.

† Some understand this as meant of God the Father, and others of our Lord Jesus Christ, because he is the next antecedent; accordingly they refer "in his times" to the season of his glorious appearing, when he will most illustriously demonstrate himself to be, what he witnessed concerning himself before

Pontius Pilate: And it is certain that King of kings and Lord of lords, is a title given to Christ, *Rev.* xvii. 14. and xix. 15: but I do not find that it is any where, unless here, given to the Father. However, it remains doubtful by the connection, whether this and the three following verses are to be referred

show, who is the blessed and only Parentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

in opposition to all other gods, and created beings, is blessed for ever in the enjoyment of himself, and is the only supreme and omnipotent, Ruler over all kings and lords, and infinitely more excellent and glorious than any of them; they, and all that they are and have, being entirely dependent on his will and pleasure, and under his controul, *by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.* (Prov. viii. 15.)

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

16 Who only has an unbeginning and never-ending life of perfect blessedness and glory, originally, necessarily, unchangeably and independently in himself; and dwells in such an illustrious *Shechina* in the heaven of heavens, as no mortal man can have access to; whom no man, in this state of imperfection and frailty, has ever seen, or can see in his full blaze of glory, and live, (*Ex. xxxiii. 20.*); nor can any corporal eye ever behold him in his divine nature, in which he is a purely spiritual being. To whom be ascribed all honour, might and dominion, with cheerful and profound adoration, as is most due, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

17 In this view of things, and in reflection on the important trust thus solemnly committed to you, Give faithful admonitions, in the name of Christ, to those that abound in the riches of this world, to watch and pray, and take the utmost care, that they be not lifted up with pride, self-sufficiency, and contempt of others, on that account; nor set their hearts upon, or place their confidence in, their earthly possessions, which are all precarious and fleeting, and, when least expected, may *make themselves wings, and flee away:* (*Prov. xxiii. 5.*) But teach them to put their entire trust in the only living and true God, who daily loads us with his benefits, and who, in the riches of his mercy and goodness, gives us every thing for necessity, and many things for delight, yea, all things that we enjoy for present support and comfort, *pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.* (2 Pet. i. 3.)

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

18 Charge them also, as they will answer it at the great day of account, that, instead of abusing their riches, and mis-spending them lavishly upon themselves, they do all the good they can with them; that they abound in better riches to their own and others advantage,

page,

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red to God the Father, or to our Lord Jesus Christ; but, which ever way it be considered, the doxology, ver. 16. to one of these persons, is not to the exclusion of the other;

since the like is offered to the Father, Phil. iv. 20. to the son, Rev. i. 5. and conjunctly and equally to both, Rev. v. 13. See the note on chap. i. 17.)

tage, even in every good work, which their affluence obliges them to, and makes them capable of; that they be cheerfully disposed of their own accord, on all proper occasions, to give liberally for promoting every good cause, and to be generous in communicating to the necessities of the poor, *especially of the household of faith.* (Gal. vi. 10.)

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

19 And let them know that they will heap up the best and most substantial of all treasures, to their own use and benefit, by their humble trust in God through Christ, the sincerity of which is proved by its fruitfulness unto all good works, (*ver. 17, 18.*) and which, in opposition to uncertain riches, rests on a sure foundation of hope and happiness for the world to come; that, when they enter into it, they may actually lay hold on, and take possession of eternal life, as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, (*Rom. vi. 23.* see the note there,) and as the crown of life, which they shall receive at the end of their course, like the runners in the Grecian games, who, upon finishing their race, lay hold on the garland that is placed at the goal. (See the note on *Phil. iii. 14.*)

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called:

20 O my dear *Timothy*, Think seriously of these things; and, in consideration of their vast importance, Take special care to preserve the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel pure and uncorrupted, and to exercise all your spiritual gifts in fulfilling your ministry, according to these directions; all which are committed to you by the Lord Jesus Christ, as a sacred trust to be faithfully managed for him, and given an account of to him: And that you may do this to the best advantage, keep yourself clear of, and utterly reject the impious, trifling, empty and noisy talk of the Judaizing teachers, and their oppositions to the true doctrine of Christ, by their corrupt notions of the law, which I have been cautioning you against: but which they falsely call knowledge, though they neither know what they say, nor whereof they affirm. (*Chap. i. 4.—7.*)

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

21 And so pernicious, as well as empty and vain, is their pretended knowledge, that some among them, who have been mighty fond of it, and pride themselves in it, have by that means run off from the faith of the gospel into gross errors. That you may be kept steady in the only true faith, and be abundantly assisted and succeeded in maintaining and promoting it, to the glory of God, and the salvation of your own and many others souls, May the divine love and favour ever attend and prosper you in your way and work, and  
throughly

thoroughly season your heart with every grace of the Spirit, *Amen*. So let it be, and so I trust it will be.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What an honour and encouragement is it to believing servants, even of the lowest rank, that they are brethren in Christ, partakers of all spiritual blessings, equally with Christians of the highest civil stations! But what a reproach is it to the name of their God, and to his gospel, for them to be so conceited on this account, as to think themselves above paying the duty they owe to their earthly masters, even though they be infidels; or to be less, and not rather, more respectful and diligent in the service of religious masters, because they are brethren in the fellowship of the gospel! These things are to be taught and learned; and whosoever, under false pretences to knowledge, suggest sentiments contrary to these, or to any other doctrine of Christ, which is a doctrine according to godliness, they are to be rejected, as persons, that are proud and ignorant, perverse and desitute of the truth, fond of vain opinions and disputations about words, which tend to strife and envy, railing and unwarrantable suspicions, and that make a trade of religion to save their secular interests: But true godliness, with a satisfied mind as to wordly circumstances, though we have only necessary food and raiment, is the best of all gain; and therefore is to be cultivated in earnest pursuits after righteousness, goodness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. And, alas! What is this poor empty world, that we should set our hearts upon it! We brought none of its enjoyments into it, and whatsoever we have of them here, we must certainly, ere long, leave them all behind us: And they that will seek to be rich, right or wrong, throw themselves into many dangerous temptations, and foolish ensnaring lusts and passions, that will one time or other recoil upon them, and pierce them through with many agonizing sorrows; will make them err from the faith of the gospel; and plunge them into deep and endless ruin: For the love of money is the root of these, and numberless other sinful and destructive evils. How needful then is it, to warn the rich of this world to be humble amidst all their affluence; and not place their confidence in uncertain wealth, but in God, through Christ, who is a free and bountiful giver, of all things relating to this life and that which is to come! And how ready should they be to prove the sincerity of the profession of their faith, and trust in the Lord, by its genuine fruits in every good and charitable work, which will be laying in a good stock of solid happiness for the world to come, that, at the end of their Christian-course, they may receive the crown of life! O how conscientious and laborious should the servants of Christ be, in discharging every part of the ministerial trust that is committed to them; in maintaining the good profession they have made various ways before many witnesses; and in fighting the good fight of faith, till they lay hold on eternal life, at the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ! And how mindful should they always be of the solemn bonds that are laid upon them, to adhere with fidelity to divine directions, as in the presence of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ! He courageously owned himself to be the true Messiah, before *Pontius Pilate*, and at his second coming, will be gloriously manifested to be so, by the only living and life-giving God; who is the supreme almighty Governor, above all other kings and lords; who only has immortality essentially in himself, dwells in glory inaccessible to frail mortals, and is invisible in his own being: To whom be ascribed everlasting honour, dominion, and power, *Amen*. May all that love him unite in prayer for his ministering servants, that his free favour, in all its manifestations and effects, may perpetually enable them to be diligent and faithful in his work! *Amen*.

# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

Second Epistle of the Apostle PAUL

TO

TIMOTHY.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

## The Preface to the Second EPISTLE to TIMOTHY.

**T**HIS Epistle is generally, and most probably, supposed from *chap. iv. 6.* and several other passages, to be the last that the apostle wrote under his second confinement at *Rome*, a little before his martyrdom there. It contains some further directions to *Timothy*, with a somewhat more immediate reference than the former, (which is thought to have been wrote about nine years before) to his own *personal* conduct, in the discharge of his office, as an evangelist.

The apostle introduces it with the same salutation; and like affectionate expressions to him, and concern for him, as before; and with the like assertions of his character, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, for *Timothy's* encouragement, and for countenancing him against all the cavils of the *Judaizers*, that would oppose him in fulfilling his trust, according to this and his former instructions: and to animate him the more in his work, and fortify him against the fear and shame of sufferings on account of his faithfulness therein, he sets before him the eternal salvation, and the discoveries of immortal life, that Christ has brought in by the gospel, together with his own cheerfulness and undaunted courage, under his extreme sufferings for its sake; to which he adds grateful reflections on the behaviour of *Onesiphorus*, who had owned him, and had been a comfort to him, while others deserted him, *chap. i.* He thereupon exhorts *Timothy* to keep up a constant and entire dependence on the grace of Christ; and, in its strength, to acquit himself with fidelity, in the discharge of his office; in bravely enduring all hardships and distresses for Christ, after the apostle's own example;

example; in representing the importance, as well as the truth of the things he was to preach to others; as also in living the doctrines he preached, and supporting them, with a becoming spirit, against the ungodly principles and practices of those that would subvert them, *chap. ii.* He then forewarns him of a particular sort of corrupt professors and preachers, whom he describes, and, in opposition to whom, he reminds *Timothy* of his own doctrine, manner of life, and behaviour under various persecutions; and enforces a stedfast adherence to divine revelation, whatever it might cost him, *chap. iii.* He likewise gives him a solemn charge to fulfil his ministry, with the utmost care and diligence, in consideration of the apostacies that would appear among many professing Christians, and of his having no further assistance from himself, who was going to seal his testimony with his blood, which he thought of with joy and triumph, as the crown of all his labours and sufferings: And concludes with expressions of earnest desire to see *Timothy*, as soon as possible; with an account of the different circumstances and behaviour of several persons whom he names; and with salutations, and his usual benediction, *chap. iv.*

## C H A P. I.

*Paul asserts his apostolic character, salutes Timothy, and expresses his great affection to him in remembrance of his sympathizing tears and unfeigned faith, 1,—5. Exhorts him to a diligent improvement of his spiritual gifts, without fear or shame on account of sufferings for Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel; and to hold fast that blessed doctrine which was committed to him, 6,—14. And tells him of many that had basely deserted him, but speaks with honour and affection of Onesiphorus, for his kindness to him, 15,—18.*

## TEXT.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

## PARAPHRASE.

PAUL, who is called and qualified to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the free and sovereign appointment and commission of God the Father, to bear witness to the once crucified, but now risen and exalted Saviour, and to preach him among Jews, and especially Gentiles, according to the promise of eternal life, which was given in Christ before the world began, (Tit. i. 2. and in due time was made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, as to be fulfilled in him, in whom all nations were to be blessed, (Gen. xxii. 18.) which life is reposed in him, purchased and dispensed by him, and obtained through faith in him. (1 John v. 11, 12.)

2 Even I Paul send greeting to you, my dearly beloved son *Timothy*. (See the note on 1 Tim. i. 2.) May the free favour and tender compassion, with all their happy manifestations, fruits and effects. (See the note

To Timothy my dearly beloved son: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

on *Rom. i. 7.*) and all manner of prosperity for soul and body, time and eternity, abound toward you from God the Father, as the first mover in our salvation, and from Jesus Christ, your Lord and mine, as concurring with him therein, and as the purchaser and giver of all blessings, in the execution of his mediatorial office.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

3 I heartily render thanks and praise to God, whom I religiously worship and adore after the manner of my progenitors, even the only true God, whom *Abraham Isaac and Jacob*, and all my pious ancestors served; and this I now do with a heart purified by faith and a conscience purged from dead works by the blood of Christ. (*Acts xv. 9*, and *Heb. ix. 14.*) I bless his holy name, that, though in the days of my *Judaism*, I was dreadfully misguided by corrupt passions and prejudices, I now in love to him, and to you his faithful servant, am continually mindful and make mention of you, as in all solemn addresses to the throne\* of grace, so particularly in my morning and evening prayers, which I constantly offer up every day, as the *Jews* were wont to do at the time of their morning and evening sacrifice, and as is an incumbent duty for all Christians to practise day by day, as their reasonable service.

\* Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

4 And so ardent is my affection to you, that (if it be the will of God) I am exceedingly desirous of seeing you, once more, before my death, which is now at hand, (*chap. iv. 6.*) that I may have the pleasure of your company, and an opportunity of leaving with you some farther instructions, as occasions may require, and as the dying charge of a tender parent to his most beloved son. And there are two things among others, that so greatly endear you to me, and would fill me with the more abundant joy in seeing you again; one is the touching reflection I make upon the affectionate, filial, and moving flood of tears†, which you poured out at our last part-

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\* "Prayers night and day" seems most immediately to relate to the morning and evening prayers which used to be offered up by the Jews at the time of their morning and evening sacrifice, *Exod. xxix. 38, 39.* compared with *Luke. i. 10.*: And these are undoubtedly proper seasons of stated solemn addresses to God with thanksgivings for the mercies of the night, or of the day past, and with some humble supplications, and commitments of ourselves and all our own and others concerns to the Lord, for the mercies of the day, or of the night, that is coming on. And yet they are not to be restrained to these stated seasons; but are like-

wise to be presented to God on all suitable occasions, and especially in important circumstances and turns of life, relating to spiritual and temporal things. (See *Dr Whitby's note on 1 Thess. v. 17.*)

† These tears were manifestly those which *Timothy* shed at the apostle's last parting with him; and it is thought by many, that he refers to that melting leave which the *Epheſian* elders took of the apostle, *Acts xx. 37, 38* among whom *Timothy* is supposed to have been present, and wept most abundantly: But as it is uncertain whether he were in that company, or not; and as that seems to have been about nine or ten years before the writing



parting, on account of the danger I was like to be exposed to, and which made a deep impression on my soul then, and, at times, ever since.

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

5 The other thing that thus engages my heart to you, is, the lively sense I retain of that sincere faith which you have manifested on all occasions to be in you, without the least appearance of hypocrisy, or disguise; (*ἀνυπόκριτον*) even that same sort of faith which was not only professed by, but discovered itself to be seated, as an active and abiding principle, in the heart, first of your pious grandmother Lois, as also in your no less truly religious mother Eunice, who believed in the promised Messiah, and afterwards embraced him upon the gospel-revelation of him; and I am fully satisfied, from what I have seen and known of you, that the like undissembled faith is planted also in your own heart; and so God's covenant with believers and their seed is remarkably fulfilled in your mother and you.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

6 Therefore in my great affection to you, and in consideration of the extraordinary favour which God has still further shown in most eminently fitting you for ministerial service, I now write to you again, to remind you of my former exhortation, that you may not be remiss in cherishing and improving the spiritual gifts, which he has freely bestowed upon you, and which still remain in you; but, like one that would blow up live-coals, when covered with ashes, into a flame, may (*ἀνακαίνισαι*) by diligent meditation, reading and prayer, stir up and kindle those gifts into a sacred fervor and activity, which God has remarkably honoured you with, by means of the imposition of my own and others hands, as the signal of his conveying them to you, at your ordination. (See the paraphrase on 1 Tim. iv. 14.)

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

7 You ought by no means to be discouraged in the exercise of those gifts, on account of the opposition of your adversaries: For the temper and disposition which God by his Spirit has formed in us, whom he hath called and fitted for holy ministrations, is not a spirit of cowardice and dread of our enemies, whether men or devils; but is a spirit of holy fortitude and undaunted courage to encounter all difficulties and dangers; and of fervent love to Christ and his cause, and to immortal souls; and of sobriety and good judgment, (*σωφροσύνη*)

#### N O T E.

ing of this epistle, the apostle had probably been him since that time; and therefore the parting, here referred to, was in all likelihood on some later occasion; though the

history of the Acts, which is supposed to have ended six or seven years before this epistle was wrote, gives us no account of it.

σπονδῶν) in a due government of our passions, and in stedfastly adhering to, and patiently suffering for, the true gospel of Christ.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God;

8 Let therefore such considerations as these carry you above all shame, discouragement or faint-heartedness, in bearing a noble and open testimony to our blessed Lord and Saviour, and to his gospel, in which he gives testimony unto himself, as he is its principle subject, and which he owns with the power of his Spirit; and let the same thoughts fortify you against being ashamed to own, vindicate, and visit me in my bonds, as his apostle and prisoner: But let them, on the contrary, animate you to sympathize with me in my persecutions, and to be ready to endure the same yourself with all cheerfulness for the gospel's sake, in humble dependence upon the mighty assistance which God by his Spirit will give you, to strengthen and enable you to suffer patiently, on account of your firm attachment to it. And well may we cheerfully submit to all tribulations, dangers and reproaches, for the honour and glory of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.

9 Who has provided a Saviour for us, and given us to him to take care that we might not be cut off in our sins, and has appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thess. v. 9.) who has already purchased it for us; and in consequence of all this, God has effectually called us, by the gospel, to holiness here, in order to our being fitted for, and brought to the possession of perfect happiness for ever hereafter, (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.) All which he has done, not as influenced to it by any foresight of our good works, as though we should ever deserve it; but entirely of his free favour, according to his own sovereign intention and resolution, and the mere unmerited kindness of his own gracious heart, which was set upon us, and had a special regard to us, in Christ our head, from all eternity, before the foundation of the world, (Ephes. i. 4.) and which began to dawn in the first promise, (Gen. iii. 17.) before the Jewish ages\*.

10 But

#### N O T E.

\* I have taken in the notion which Mr Locke and others have given of the words before the world began, as signifying "before the secular ages of the Jews." (πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων) But as the purpose of God was certainly from eternity, and the world (αἶων) often signifies the world, and is used plurally, as for ages, so for the worlds, (Heb. i. 2.) and as the phrase (αὐτὸ ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς) evidently sig-

nifies from the "beginning of the world, or from the beginning of time," Luke i. 70, and Acts iii. 21. Why should not the like phrase (πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων) signify also "before the beginning of the world, or of all time or ages," and be in sense the same with "before the foundation of the world," as that is often used to signify from all eternity?

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light thro' the gospel :

10 But which gracious purpose, that lay from all eternity as a secret in his own bosom, and was afterwards in great measure concealed under the types and shadows of the Old Testament, is now evidently discovered, with illustrious brightness, by the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose appearance in flesh and in the execution of his mediatorial office, has, like that of the rising sun, (*εὐφραντες*) scattered *Jewish* and *Heathen* darkness; who in virtue of his dying for our sins in our nature and in our stead, and of his rising, as a conqueror, from the grave, has taken away the sting of death, broke its power, and turned it into a blessing, instead of a curse, to them that believe in him, and delivered them from eternal death, (*1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.*); and who has made a plain revelation of a blessed life, and immortal glory of soul and body in the heavenly world, by means of the gospel, which shows us the certainty, together with the sublime, excellent and spiritual nature of that state, and our way of arriving at it through him.

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

11 This is a blessed and glorious gospel indeed, for the dispensation which I, like a herald, sent to proclaim peace by Jesus Christ, am appointed and constituted an authentic publisher, (*κηρυξ*) and an apostle, to bear witness to a crucified and risen Saviour, by immediate commission from him, and *that* with a particular relation to the *Gentiles*, (*Acts ix. 15.*) as a preacher to them, that they may hear and believe the glad tidings of eternal life to the saving of their souls.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless, I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

12 And it is for my faithfulness and zeal in discharging this office, and *that* particularly to them, that I now actually suffer all the disgrace and severities of my present imprisonment, and am daily expecting martyrdom itself: But, in consideration of the glorious excellency of this cause, I am so far from being ashamed of Christ and his gospel, or of my sufferings for them, that I glory in them, and have the most joyful expectation of a happy issue of all in a better world: For I well know, in the light of God's word and Spirit, and upon long trial and experience, what a gracious, all-sufficient, faithful and divine Saviour he is, whom I have received and relied upon by faith; and I am fully satisfied, on the surest grounds, that he has all power and authority in his office-capacity, which includes his will, to secure my soul, with all its eternal concerns that I have entrusted him with, as my most

important *depositum*, to take care of † against the day of the final judgment, which may be emphatically called *that day*, as it is the concluding day at the end of time, and the day, in which every one will be more concerned than in any other day whatsoever, as his condition, for happiness, or misery, will then be solemnly, publicly and unalterably decided for eternity.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

13 Whatever trials therefore you meet with, as may be expected in the cause of Christ; see to it, that, encouraged by my example of faith, patience and hope in sufferings, you keep in memory, stedfastly adhere to, and resolutely maintain (*υποστητεν υπακουοντων λογον*) the pattern, or platform of the uncorrupted, wholesome, nourishing and healing doctrine of the gospel, that is contained in those words of truth and soberness, which you have been taught by me, in conversation, preaching and writing, with respect to faith in Christ, and love to him, and to all fellow-Christians for his sake \*; and which you received, with a firm persuasion of their truth and reality, as *faithful sayings*, and embraced with cordial affection, as *worthy of all acceptance*; which you are also to preach with fidelity and love, as wrought and excited in you toward Jesus, the anointed head

#### N O T E S:

† "That which I have committed to him against that day," is understood by some to mean *the gospel-doctrine*, and by others the *church of Christ*, which was committed to the apostle's trust. But, how great and important a truth forever there be in either of these sentiments, they do not seem fully to agree with the apostle's design in this place, nor with the form of expression here used: For he proposes this, as an encouragement to Timothy, not to be "assumed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of his prisoner," but to submit cheerfully to sufferings for Christ and the gospel's sake, ver. 8: And a consideration of the blessed advantage that he should have from Christ at the great day, was much more proper to enforce this, than a consideration that Christ would take care of his own church and cause, whether Timothy laboured in it, or suffered for it, or not: And the apostle calls it *his own depositum*, (*την παραθεκεν μου*) which he committed to Christ, that he might receive it again with safety, but *the gospel and the church of Christ* are not the property of, nor are to be given back again to, any minister or apostle as *his own*. The noun, (*παροδωκεν*) here used, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament: but the verb (*παροδιδωμι*) is several times used for committing persons to God, as in Acts xiv. 23, and xx. 32; and the apostle's act of faith here, amidst troubles and dangers, and near

prospects of death and eternity, was like that which our Lord himself exercised towards his Father, in his expiring moments, saying, (Luke xxiii. 46.) "Father, into thine hand I commend (*παροδωκεν*) my spirit;" and was such an act of faith as the apostle Peter speaks of, (1 Epist. iv. 19.) "let them that suffer according to the will of God commit (*παροδιδωκεν*) the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator." This commitment of the soul to Christ *against that day*, evidently means against the day of judgment, when the life and immortality, which the apostle had been speaking of, ver. 10. shall be enjoyed in all perfection and glory, which will be at the day of Christ's second appearing, Col. iii. 4. and Heb. ix. 28. This is the day that the apostle had in view, and refers to again and again, in this epistle, under apprehensions of the near approach of death, as in ver. 18. and chap. ii. 10, 11, 12. and iv. 1, 8, 18. This is sometimes called, by way of emphasis, *the day of Christ*, (Phil. i. 6, 10.) *the day*, (1 Cor. iii. 13) and *that day* here, and in several other places, and *the great day*, (Jude, ver. 6.) and *the day of judgment* very often.

\* Faith and love may relate either to the doctrines received, or to "the manner" of Timothy's receiving and preaching them.

head and Saviour of the church, and by supernatural influence from him.

14 That good thing, which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

14 As to that momentous trust and treasure, inclusive of your spiritual gifts, and of the doctrine of the gospel, and your office as a minister to preach it, which is excellent in itself, and good for the use of edifying your own and other souls, to the glory of God and their salvation, and was committed by the Lord Jesus Christ to you at your solemn ordination; see that you be faithful in maintaining it against all the efforts of your enemies, and in preserving it pure and uncorrupted, with religious care and diligence, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who permanently resides with peculiar relation and influence, and by his gifts and graces, in you and me, as he ever does, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, (*Eph. iv. 7.*) in all true believers and faithful ministers, (*John xiv. 16, 17.*) to enable us to fulfil the duties of our stations, in the face of all opposition and danger.

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

15 You ought to be the rather excited to all faithfulness and diligence in these things, as you cannot but know, that the generality of the *Asiatic* professors of Christ's name \* have shamefully deserted me in my present sufferings for his sake, as being afraid, or ashamed to own and stand by me in them: Of this sort *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes* are notorious instances.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;

16 However, in this time of so great desertion, I have not been left utterly destitute of friends, for whom I heartily bless God, and implore his blessing; as particularly my earnest desire and prayer is, that the Lord, who *with the merciful will shew himself merciful*, (*Psal. lviii. 25.*) would multiply mercies of every kind, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, upon the family of *Onesiphorus*, † in return for the mercy he hath shewn to me: For, notwithstanding the cowardice of pretended friends, and the fury of open enemies, he, with a truly Christian courage and compassion, has often relieved and comforted me in my distress, (*ambros.*) by seasonable visits

#### N O T E

\* They which are in Asia are supposed by some to mean, such as lived in Asia, and by others, such as were natives of Asia, but at this time were at Rome; the last of which seems most probable to see, but the paraphrase has left it undetermined.

† It seems from ver. 18. compared with chap. iv. 19. that *Onesiphorus* was an inhabitant of Ephesus, as the place of his usual abode where his family dwelt, but from which he was now absent, being very

probably still at Rome, for which reason his family, without mentioning him, is spoken of here, and blessed, chap. iv. 19: But I can see no force in what *Grotius* and *Eltius* offer for their supposition that he was dead: All that the apostle says about him has a contrary aspect; and therefore *Eltius's* conclusion from hence, that prayers are to be offered for departed saints, is built upon a mere conjecture, without any solid foundation. (See *Hammond's* note on the place.)

sits and supplies of things convenient for me, which have been like a cooling breeze to refresh me in the heat of my tribulations; and so great was his affection to me, and to the glorious cause for which I suffer, that he was not ashamed to own me, or it, under all the ignominy and reproach that attend my chain, by which I am held, as a prisoner of the Lord, in order to my being put to death.

17 But when he was in Rome he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

17 But when he came to Rome, he was so far from being shy of appearing to have any concern with me, that he took great pains to inquire where, and in what prison, or in what ward I was shut up; and did not rest till he had found me out, and got access to me.

18 The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

18 O may the Lord Jesus, for whose sake this his servant has been so exceeding compassionate, kind and useful to me under my sufferings, may he, and God the Father, in the riches of his grace through him, return it manifold into his own bosom, not only in this world, but especially in the world to come, that he himself may find mercy of the great Lord and Judge of all, to be owned of him before his Father and the holy angels, when the *times of refreshing* (*αναψυχας*) shall come from his presence, (*Acts iii. 19.*); and to be publicly adjudged to eternal life, according to the greatness of his mercy, (*Jude, ver. 21.*) at the great day of account, (see the note on *ver. 12.*) that final, most important and decisive of all days, for a succeeding eternity! Gratitude demands my best wishes for such a fast friend, who still approves himself to be so to the last, in the very worst of times: And you very well know, and I cannot forget, in how many instances of great kindness he formerly assisted and refreshed me, by various means, under all my troubles, when I was at Ephesus.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

Shall an inspired apostle commit the true doctrine of Christ to ministers, by immediate commission from God? and shall they not keep it pure and uncorrupt, and be ready to suffer for it, in dependence on his power, as exerted by the Holy Spirit? or shall they preach it, and the people not regard it? What a contempt is this of divine authority, and of the glorious gospel at once! But O happy souls, that serve God with a pure heart, and receive the gospel with unfeigned faith and love, after the example of religious ancestors; and lay themselves out to propagate it, in like manner to others! It contains the promise of everlasting life thro' Jesus Christ; opens the eternal purpose of God about the salvation of his people; is a means of their effectual calling; assures the believer that the sting and power of death are vanquished for him; and sets the immortal life of soul and body, and the way of obtaining it, in the clearest light. Who would not be contented to undergo the severest persecutions, without fear or shame, for the sake of the rich advantages that are to be hoped for from it! May we have the firmest confidence in Christ, as the all-sufficient Saviour, to secure the great concerns of

our souls, that we commit by faith to his care, against the great day of account!—How dear is one sincere servant of Christ to another, as partakers of the same faith, and embarked in the same noble cause! How greatly do they all need; and how heartily do they wish, and daily pray for grace, mercy, and peace to be multiplied to one another, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! How affectionately are they desirous of each other's company, especially in times of great tribulation! How tenderly do they sympathize one with another in their afflictions! How concerned are they that a due improvement be made of the gifts of the Spirit, which are graciously bestowed upon their brethren in the ministry, who are endowed, according to the spirit of the gospel, not with a timorous, cowardly temper, but with holy fortitude and love, sobriety, wisdom and sound judgment, for fulfilling their trust, in the midst of all difficulties, opposition and danger! And while many desert the cause of Christ, and his suffering servants, like Phygellus and Hermogenes, blessed be God, there are others, who, like Onesiphorus, are not ashamed to own them in the worst of times; but are willing to seek opportunities of shewing all possible regard to them. May the Lord be gracious to such and their families; and grant them mercy to eternal life in the day of judgment.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle directs Timothy to the grace that is in Christ for all spiritual strength, 1. Exhorts him to take care that there be a succession of faithful ministers, and to persevere in his own work, with constancy and diligence, like a soldier, a combatant, and a husbandman, encouraging him hereunto by his own example, and assurances of a happy issue of his faithfulness, 2,—13. Advises him to guard against striving about unprofitable and pernicious words, and to study to approve himself to God, warning him to shun vain babblings and dangerous errors, that eat like a canker, as in the instances of Hymeneus and Philetus, and comforts him with the thought, that nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, 14,—19. Tells him that several sorts of professors are to be expected in the church, as various sorts of vessels are used in a great house, 20, 21. And charges him to flee youthful lusts, and to manage the whole of his conversation, ministry, and zeal against error, with a becoming meekness of spirit, as most likely to be successful, 22,—26.*

## TEXT.

**T**IMOTHY, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

## PARAPHRASE.

**C**ONSIDERING therefore the things that have been mentioned, (*chap. i. 15,—18.*) and the danger of taking a wrong part in them, let me intreat you, my dear son in the faith, fellowship and ministry of the gospel, not to be self-confident, or trust in the grace you have already received, which, left to itself, would soon fail; but to have a constant recourse, and go out of yourself to the fountain of all grace, that you may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, (*Ephes. vi. 10.*); may keep up an entire dependence on the inexhaustible fund of grace that is treasured up in Christ; your head, and in the free favour of God, as residing

manifestly

manifesting, and exhibiting itself in him; and may continually receive of his fulness grace for grace, (John i. 16.)

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 And, setting out in this strength for the discharge of every duty, and for propagating the true doctrines of the gospel, which I received by immediate revelation, and communicated to you, and in a public solemn manner committed to your trust, at your ordination, in the presence of many witnesses, † according to the numerous testimonies that are given to them by the law and the prophets, (Rom. iii. 21.) take heed that you transmit them pure and uncorrupted, just as you received them from me, to such other ministers, as approve themselves to be faithful believers, that have the glory of Christ, the truth of the gospel, and the good of souls at heart, and are well furnished with knowledge and utterance, gifts and graces, to dispose and qualify them for explaining, proving, defending and applying the whole counsel of God to their hearers.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,

3 As this is the noblest of all services, spare no pains, nor be afraid of any difficulties, or dangers, you may be exposed to in it; but consider that as you are in a state of warfare, attended with many sufferings and hardships, in the way to victory and triumph; so you ought to acquit yourself with holy resolution, vigour, and courage, like a good soldier that fights as a volunteer in the cause; and under the banner of Jesus Christ, the Captain of salvation, who is able to support you under, and carry you through, all your toils and troubles, and crown them with everlasting honours.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

4 According to the obligations of this character, you should give yourself wholly to the work of the ministry, (1 Tim. iv. 15.); for you know that, by the Roman laws, no man that lists, as a soldier, into the imperial army, is allowed to spend his time, and involve himself, in the common business of trade, husbandry, or other secular employments; but is to devote himself entirely to the duty of his military station, that he may diligently fulfil the orders of his general, and be approved of him who has taken him upon the muster-rolls: In like manner, you, as a minister of Christ, ought not to follow civil callings to intangle your thoughts, and swallow up your time; but to apply them to spiritual exercises in the

#### N O T E.

† "Among many witnesses," (δια πολλῶν μαρτύρων) properly signifies by many witnesses; and though it may sometimes be understood to mean among, as in 1 Cor. i. 8.

and Gal. iii. 19. and is so rendered here; yet, as this is an exceeding rare construction, I have taken in both this, and the other most common sense of the proposition.



the service of Christ, your sovereign Lord and King, that you may acquit yourself agreeable to his will, who has appointed, called, and authorised you to fight the good fight of faith, till you lay hold on eternal life, (1 Tim. vi. 12.) †

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

5 And as ministers are called to various sorts of conflicts, (Acts xx. 22, 23, 24. and Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.) if any man enters the lists, like a combatant in the Grecian games, he is never reckoned a victor, nor crowned as such, unless he keep to the stated rules of those exercises which require great pains in running, wrestling, and the like; so you, who have entered into Christ's service, are to exert yourself with labour and diligence, for overcoming all opposers, in his way and work, according to the prescriptions of his word, as ever you expect that, *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away,* (1 Pet. v. 4.)

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

6 As ministers are also compared to labourers in the Lord's harvest or vineyard, (Luke x. 2. and xx. 9, &c.) you know that the husbandman must take much pains in plowing and sowing, or in digging and planting, and must do this with patience for some length of time, before he can have a good crop, that he may gather the fruits of the earth; so you are to be laborious in preaching the gospel for the glory of Christ, and the good of souls, and to wait with patience before-hand for the coming of the Lord, that you may *rejoice in the day of Christ, that you have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain,* (James v. 7. and Phil. ii. 16.)

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

7 Pray consider seriously what I deliver to you under these figures, that you may look upon yourself, and behave as a soldier, a combatant, and a husbandman, in the work of the Lord; and may reckon upon hardships and labour in attending the services which belong to persons of all those characters; and at the same time may maintain a comfortable hope of a blessed and gracious reward at the end of them all: For in this way of reflecting on these things, the Lord, as I trust and heartily wish, \* will further enlighten your minds in all wisdom,

#### N O T E.

† In this and the next verse, there is a plain allusion to the Roman law of arms, and to that of the Grecian games; according to "the first" of which, the soldier was not to engage in civil occupations, (Vid. Orat. in loc.); and according to "the last," the combatant was to keep strictly to the rules of the game, without which he could

not be crowned with a garland, as a conqueror, (see the notes on 1 Cor. ix. 24, —27.)

\* "The Lord give thee understanding," (Jaw) as in the Alexandrian, Claremont, and other good copies, (Vid. Mill. in loc.) "the Lord will give thee understanding;" (Jaw) But if we retain the common reading, yet, as Dr Whitby observes, (Jaw) give

wisdom and spiritual understanding, (*Col. i. 9.*) to make a right judgment and application of them, and so impress upon your own heart a deep and abiding sense of your duty in this, and all things else that concerns you, as a Christian, or a minister of Jesus Christ.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel:

8 The grand article which I would have you constantly bear in mind, for your own support and encouragement under your trials and sufferings, and remind others of in your preaching, for their conversion and establishment in the faith and hope of the gospel, is, that Jesus the anointed Saviour, who according to the flesh proceeded from the loins of the famous patriarch David, having suffered unto death, as a sacrifice for sin, was raised again from the dead for our justification, (*Rom. iv. 25.*) according to the glad tidings of salvation, that I have preached and confirmed in my ministry, which indeed is not my gospel, as though I were the author of it, but a dispensation of which is committed unto me. (*1 Cor. ix. 17.*)

9 Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

9 This is a great and fundamental truth, for the preaching of which to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, I undergo the severest persecutions, even to confinement, in which I am held in bonds, as though I were a malefactor, not fit to live; and so am prevented publicly preached it, as I used to do, and, were it the will of God, would still gladly persist in: But, blessed be his name, his word is not confined, or shut up in a corner, or hindered from being proclaimed and made effectual in many places, by others of his servants, for bringing in multitudes of souls to Christ; and it is further confirmed by the testimony I give to the power of divine grace in my patient and joyful sufferings for it.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

10 The thought of what has been already, and will still further be done by the power of God, as attending the ministrations of the gospel, is such a comfort to me, that I cheerfully submit to all the distresses that are, or can be laid upon me, in love and zeal for the spiritual welfare of those whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, (*2 Thess. ii. 13.*) that they, encouraged by my example, may also be induced to believe, cordially embrace, and boldly profess the truth and excellence of the gospel, notwithstanding the violence

#### N O T E.

give is often used for (*δωσει*) "will give;" and as the particle (*ωσπερ*) here rendered *and*, very rarely, if ever, bears that sense; but is a casual particle, and signifies *for*, I have

considered it in that view, and yet glanced at the other, since it does not appear to be expulsive in this place, as it sometimes is in others.

violence of the times; and may, in this way of God's appointment, arrive at an actual possession of that salvation, which consists, not only in an entire freedom from all evil; but likewise in the complete enjoyment of an eternal inheritance of all possible honour and delight, that is purchased by, and reserved in Christ for them who are called, *by the gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (2 Thess. ii. 14.)

11 This doctrine of Christ's death and resurrection, and of the future glory of the elect, who are, or shall be brought to believe in him, is certainly true; and, for the comfort of his suffering servants, may be fully depended upon: For if, in conformity to the crucified Jesus, and by virtue derived from him, as the head with whom we are vitally united, we be dead to sin and to this world, and willing to lose our mortal lives for his sake; we also, in conformity to him, and by the power of his resurrection, shall certainly be quickened and raised to a glorious immortality, to live in the heavenly world with him. (See *John* xii. 25, 26. *Rom.* viii. 17. and *1 Pet.* iv. 13.)

12 If we patiently endure reproach and all manner of tribulation for Christ's sake, like what he himself underwent for ours, we shall also be exalted to the dignity of sitting with him on his throne, as *kings and priests to God and his Father*: (*Rev.* i. 6. and iii. 21.) If, on the contrary, any of us, who profess to be his disciples and servants, are so terrified with fear of suffering the loss of worldly honour, ease, and enjoyments, or of liberty, or life itself, as to deny the truth of the gospel, and cast off our profession of him, or to be ashamed to own him and his cause, and either doctrinally or practically deny him, he will also be ashamed of us, and deny that he ever knew or approved of us, *when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* (*Luke* ix. 26. and xii. 8, 9.)

13 Whether we believe this comfortable truth on one hand, or this awful denunciation on the other, or not; yet he who has peremptorily assured us of both in his word, and is the *Amen*, the faithful and true Witness, will certainly perform his gracious promises to them that believe in, and own him; and will execute his just threatnings upon apostates: It is not consistent with the perfections, veracity, and immutability of his nature and will, to act contrary to his settled declarations of mercy and judgment, with regard to his final proceedings in the great day of account; for this would

be

11 It is a faithful saying. For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.

be as impossible for him to do, as to deny that he is God, and the impartial Judge of all.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

14 Remind those that you minister to, and introduce into the ministry, of these important things on which their salvation depends, and which it beboves them to regard above all things else; and charge them in the name, by the authority, and as in the presence of the Lord Jesus, as ever they will answer it to him at his coming to judgment, that they do not, instead of attending to these substantial and interesting things, go into warm, or trifling disputations about empty words, like *Jewish* fables, and genealogies, (1 Tim. i. 4.) which are of no manner of advantage to religion and godliness; but tend to puzzle and pervert the minds of hearers, and turn them off from the truth of the gospel.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

15 Let it be your great study and endeavour, by help from heaven, (*παράχρηται*) to present, or yield yourself an approved servant to God, that you may be like a good workman, who has no occasion to be ashamed on account of neglect, unskilfulness, unfaithfulness, or any other remarkable defect; and that, as the *Jewish* priests were very careful and exact in cutting up, and separating the several parts of the sacrifices, that were, or were not to be offered; so you may use the utmost care and good judgment, in separating between truth and error, important and trifling things; and in giving to every one a portion of God's word in due season, with a proper application of its various parts to the circumstances of your hearers; and (*ορθοτομῶντα*) in cutting out before them the right way of truth, holiness, and happiness, by preaching and example, according to the gospel of Christ.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

16 But be sure to avoid, oppose, and turn away from all irreverent, desiling, and noisy, but daring and empty discourse, that degrades the nature and perfections of God, and the purity of the gospel, which too many go into: For such ways of talking will tend unto, and such talkers themselves will by that means go, still further and further, into errors and practices, that are contrary to true religion, and are like to issue in the height of all impiety.

17 And their word will eat as doth as canker: of whom is Hymanens and Philatus.

17 And their doctrine will be infectious to others, as well as injurious to their own souls: For, if it be let alone, it will spread in the church, and eat out the vitals of religion; even as a gangrene, when it is got into any part of the flesh, eats it away, by degrees, to the destruction of the whole body, and of life itself. Among

mong such pernicious and ungodly talkers, there are two notorious ones, *Hymeneus*, (1 Tim. i. 20.) and *Philetus* by name;

17 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying, that the resurrection is past already; and overthrown the faith of some.

18 Who have given themselves up to such prophane and vain babbling, (*ver.* 16.) as has at length carried them off from the truth of divine revelation, and into the most destructive errors, relating to the true doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; they affirming that, whatsoever Christ, or any of the sacred writers have said about a proper resurrection, it is to be taken in some mystical or figurative sense, that is over-past already in this world \*, and not in a literal sense, as though there were to be a real resurrection of the body in the world to come: And by their bold and subtle assertions, and arguings on this point, they have so far prevailed, as to turn some off from that, and every other sound doctrine, which they before professed to believe.

19 Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

19 But notwithstanding all this, the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is certainly the truth of God, he having set his seal to it by testifying his approbation of the apostles, as his faithful servants, whom he inspired and commissioned to preach it. And notwithstanding such melancholy instances of apostates, which often occasion fears to arise in the hearts of some sincere believers, lest their faith should be also overthrown, and they should fall after the example of others, that seemed to be much greater proficient in Christianity than themselves; yet the ground of security to God's elect, (*ver.* 10.) and of an assured hope, that their faith, who are built upon Christ as a foundation, and have a principle of grace, as a ground-work of salvation, shall be answered, and that all the promises of the gospel abide firm and steady, † lyes in the eternal and unchangeable purpose of God; it having this motto, engraven, as it were on a seal, to confirm the decree, and to signify the safety, secrecy, and approbation of the objects of his love; Whatsoever becomes of others, that make fair pretences to religion, the Lord

#### N O T E.

\* All conjectures about the sense in which *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* held "that the resurrection is past already," are so exceeding uncertain, without any sufficient foundation to support them, that I cannot pretend to say particularly what it was; only it seems evident in the nature of things, that they rested on some figurative, political, or spiritual and mystical meaning, which they put upon the words, to supplant and evade the notion of a proper resurrection of the body.

† Many are the interpretations that have been given of this "foundation of God which stands sure;" some making it to mean a "work of grace," or principle of holiness in the heart; others, *faith*; others, *Christ*; others, the "promises of the gospel;" others, "the doctrine of the resurrection;" and others, "the doctrine of election;" and they are all included in the paraphrase, while it principally points to the last of them.

Lord in a distinguishing manner affectionately knows, and everlastingly owns them, whom he hath chosen for himself, and claims as his peculiar property, (see the note on *Rom.* viii. 30.) that he may keep them by his power through faith unto salvation: (*1 Pet.* i. 2, 5.) And, to shew how inseparably holiness and eternal happiness are connected in the decree, and in the execution of it, as also to prevent presumptuous confidences in electing love, without any experience of its proper fruits and effects, which are the only proofs and satisfying evidences of it to ourselves, the seal bears this further inscription, Let every one who makes a profession of Christ's name, and of trusting in him for salvation, think himself indispensibly bound, and accordingly make it his great care and concern, to depart in heart and life, and keep at the farthest distance, from every kind, degree, and instance of sin.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

20 But in the visible church there are professors and ministers of higher and lower rank; and some of them are excellent, honourable, and approved of God, as those whom he knows to be his, (*ver.* 19.) and others are mean and contemptible, a dishonour to, and disapproved of him, like those that err from the truth; (*ver.* 18.); even as in the great house of a prince or nobleman, there are not only magnificent vessels, such as are made of gold or silver for various and excellent offices; but there are also other vessels, formed out of meaner materials, such as wood or clay, for inferior purposes; and some of them are of so great worth and service, as to be in high esteem, and reflect an honour upon their Lord and Master; and others are so despicable and insignificant, as to be of little or no account, and unworthy to be deemed a part of the furniture of such a great personage's house.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

21 If therefore any one, who claims a share in the blessings, privileges, and services of the great Lord of the church, keep himself clear of the corrupt teachers, errors, and ungodly practices, but now specified, (*ver.* 16, 17, 18.) he shall be esteemed and found to be, whether minister or private Christian, an excellent vessel of mercy, (*Rom.* ix. 24.) designed and formed for the noblest purposes; purified and consecrated to the service of God, by the Holy Ghost; and commodiously fitted, apt and ready for acceptable employments in his Lord, and Master's house; and thoroughly furnished (*chap.* iii. 17.) for the performance of every work and duty, that is good in itself, or by divine institution; good as to the matter, manner, and end of it, according

ding to the good rule of the word, to the glory of God, and the good of his own and others souls.

22 Flee also youthful lusts : but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

22 And as ever you, my son *Timothy*, would approve yourself to God and your own conscience, in the discharge of your trust, labour diligently, by his grace, to fly with the utmost speed and abhorrence from all irregular inclinations, passions, and appetites ; such as ambition, pride, self-conceit, unadvised rashness, and sensuality of various kinds, which young men are prone to : Give no way to these ; but let it be your special care to pursue in your preaching and practice as an example to others, (1 *Tim.* iv. 12.) the great things, that relate to righteousness, in its full extent ; to fidelity and faith in Christ, and in God through him ; to a charitable and peaceable temper and behaviour towards all those, of what denomination soever, that invoke, worship, and adore the Lord Jesus, and God the Father through him, in the sincerity of their hearts, as purified by faith, and purged from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

23 But, as I have already advised you, (*ver.* 16.) Lay aside all inquiries and debates about impertinent, fruitless points of controversy, that have nothing of true and solid wisdom in them ; Do not intermeddle with these, as being assured that they tend only to beget quarrellsome and angry contentions, to the disturbance of the peace of the church, and hindrance of the success of the gospel.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

24 But it is no way becoming any servant of the Lord Jesus, were he only a private Christian, much less if he be a minister of the gospel of peace, to engage in any disputes with a quarrellsome and litigious spirit ; since the *wrath of man works not the righteousness of God*, (*James* i. 20.) But, on the contrary, he ought to be kind and courteous in his behaviour towards persons of all characters ; should go into the most inoffensive and least provoking manner of conveying the truth to them in love, and with clear scriptural evidence ; and he should keep his temper with all patience and long-suffering, in bearing not only the infirmities of the weak, but even the prejudices and untractableness of those, that do not immediately embrace the doctrines of the gospel ;

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to

25 Endeavouring to win upon them that set themselves against the truth, by lenity, calmness and sweetness of temper, as well as by strength of argument ; and so gently instilling knowledge, as a father would into the tender minds of his children ; in hope that, possibly

to the acknowledging of the truth :

possibly, in due season, God may convince them of their error, and bring them to a sense of the evil danger of persisting in it, and at length to relinquish it, and embrace, own, and boldly profess the truth as it is in Jesus ;

16 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

26 And that in this way, and by these means, (*ἀναιδώς*) they may awake out of the ensnaring errors by which they were lulled asleep and intoxicated like drunken men, and in which the devil had caught and held them, who, like captives of war, taken alive (*ἑστραμένω*) are in his hands to be enslaved, domineered over, and ruined by him, according to his malicious will and pleasure, *who walks about, as a rearing lion, seeking whom he may devour.* (1 Pet. v. 8.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What need have we of a continual recourse to, and supply from the fountain of all grace, which is in Christ, for the performance of every duty ! And how great is our encouragement to depend upon him, and to own and honour him ! For, according to the gospel-account of him, he is raised from the dead ; and, whatever becomes of apostates, the ground of security to God's elect stands firm in his eternal purpose, whose distinguishing love knows and owns them, and has laid upon them the most powerful and endearing obligations to depart from all iniquity. They that bravely suffer, even unto death, for Christ in this world, shall live and reign with him forever in the next ; but they, that are ashamed of him and his gospel, shall be rejected by him. Whatsoever we think of it now, he will proceed, in the judgment of the great day, according to his promises and threatenings, and can as soon cease to be, as falsify his word. These things are worthy to be remembered and inculcated upon others, just as we have received them from the great apostle ; and they ought to be committed as a sacred trust, to able and faithful ministers, among many witnesses, that they may preach them to the people. And O with what alacrity should they endure all hardships in fulfilling their office, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and as wrestlers and labourers in his service ; and not embarrass themselves with secular affairs ! They ought not to be discouraged at tribulations and bonds, or death itself, if they be called to suffer them in the cause of Christ, and for the sake of the elect, that they may be eternally saved together with themselves. How ambitious should they be of behaving to the approbation of their great Lord and Master, as vessels of honour, sanctified and fitted for his use, and for every good work, and as judicious and faithful preachers, that need not be ashamed, for want of skill or fidelity in making just and proper distributions of the word of truth ! And how carefully should they avoid, and set themselves against all errors, especially such as lead to fruitless contentions and ungodliness, and are subversive of fundamental articles of faith ; and, unless put a stop to, will spread with as mischievous influence as a gangrene, like that of Hymeneus and Philetus about the resurrection ! The best way of confuting dangerous errors, and recommending gospel-truths, is to abstain from all vices of body and mind, and particularly from those that young men are most apt to indulge ; and to live in the practice of righteousness, faith, love and peace, with all upright Christians ; to be courteous towards all men ; and to overcome opposers by a sweetness of temper, patience, and forbearance, joined with clear and scriptural reasonings, to inform and persuade them ; in hope, that God, by these means, may convince them of their sin and folly, and bring them over to believe and profess the good doctrines they before had opposed ; and so, by his grace, may awake out of their dead sleep, and escape out of the devil's snare, as those that are delivered from his will and power, and are turned to God. The Lord help us to reflect seriously on these, and all his faithful sayings : and give us wisdom and grace to make a right improvement of them to his glory, and our own and others good ;



## C H A P. III.

*The apostle foretells the rise of dangerous enemies to the truth and holiness of the gospel, 1,—9. Proposes his own example for Timothy's imitation, in opposition to them, 10,—13. And exhorts him to persist in the doctrines he had learned from him, and from the holy scriptures, which are of divine inspiration, and every way sufficient for the noblest purposes, 14,—17.*

## TEXT.

THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

## PARAPHRASE.

**I** Would further remind you, as I did in my former epistle, (*chap. iv. 1.*) that under the gospel-dispensation, which is the last and best that ever will be set up in this world, days of exceeding great difficulty and danger (*χαλεπὴ*) will trouble the church, not only on account of persecutions; but chiefly by reason of sad corruptions in doctrines and manners, as they already begin to appear, and will gradually work till they issue in a much greater apostasy still, toward the latter part of this last dispensation \*.

<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

<sup>2</sup> For, to give you some signs of the days I mean, by which they may be known, A set of wicked carnally-minded men will arise under the Christian name, that will be of a notoriously selfish spirit, aiming merely at their own secular interest, honour, and ease, without any regard to the good of others; insatiable in their thirst and pursuits after the riches of this world; vain-glorious boasters of their own endowments and advantages; lofty and arrogant in their temper and behaviour; defamers of Christ's offices and people; doctrines and ways; undutiful to their fathers and mothers, rejecting their authority; basely ungrateful to them, and other benefactors, and above all, to God for the good things they receive from him, by their means; unsanctified, impious, and profane;

<sup>3</sup> Without natural

<sup>3</sup> Destitute of all that tenderness and natural affection;

## N O T E S.

\* The corruptions specified in the following verses are very remarkably exemplified in the Romish church; in their selfish secular views, pride and blasphemies; in their children's being unnaturally put into monasteries and nunneries, sometimes without, and at others with the consent of their parents; in unthankfulness to God, and to the princes that raised the popes to their dignity and authority; in their breaking faith with, and false accusations of them, that they call Heretics; in their cruel persecutions, and contemptuous treatment of good men and things;

in their treachery and deceit, and traitorous actions against foreign princes; in their insolent and haughty behaviour, and indulging unto luxury and unlawful pleasures, and insinuating themselves into, corrupting and sifting out the secrets of families by auricular confessions; in their perverting the faith, and pretending to miracles; and all this under specious forms of piety, and external shows of devotion, instead of true love to God and godliness, &c. (See also the notes on 1 Tim. iv. 1. and 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.)

tural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

tion, (*ακοροί*) which is due to mankind in general, to near relations more particularly, and from parents to children most of all, which is found even among the brutes themselves toward their young; perfidious violators of the most solemn engagements, promises and contracts; false accusers (*διακοροί*) of other men, like devils incarnate, that delight in unjust calumnies; intemperate, (*ακραίως*) under the power of ungovernable appetites, lusts, and passions; furious and cruel in their tempers and treatment of others; without any true love (*αγαπάειν*) to the righteous, that are more excellent than themselves, or to things that are good.

4 Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than of God;

4 Betrayers of civil and sacred trusts, and delivering up even their nearest a-kin to miseries and death, for Christ's name's sake, (*Mat. x. 21, 22.*); headstrong, rash, daring and precipitant (*πρὸς τὴν ἐκ*) in their words and behaviour; puffed up with the pride and vanity of their own minds; entirely addicted to, and fond of sensual pleasures, more than, and instead of, being well affected towards God, and the things that are pleasing in his sight.

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

5 What further aggravates their monstrous wickedness is, that they cloke and disguise it with a fair show of sanctity under a profession of Christian religion, and of reverence of God, and with external forms of piety and devotion; but at the same time are utter strangers and enemies to, and practical renouncers of the life and power of true godliness to govern their hearts and lives. Now I would advise you to have nothing to do with such false pretenders to the Christian name; but to reject them with abhorrence, and to keep at the remotest distance from them, and from all fellowship and communion with them: Beware of them, as of wolves in sheep's clothing. (*Mat. vii. 15.*)

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.

6 For this sort of people are very sly in their insinuations: They, with a show of innocence and extraordinary holiness, (*Mat. xxiii. 14.*) secretly wind themselves, like snakes, into such families as they can get an interest in, or hopes of any advantage by, that they may intrude into their secrets, and exercise an absolute tyranny over their estates and consciences; and they surprisingly wheedle and ensnare the hearts and affections of weak and ignorant people, who, like thoughtless giddy women, under the power of sinful passions, are easily imposed upon, and misled by every plausible pretence, that soothes and flatters their own corrupt inclinations.

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Janes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifested unto all men, as theirs also was.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

7 And so they are always running after every new teacher, and hearkening to, and imbibing every new doctrine; and are so disconcerted, unsettled, and confounded by this means, as never to be able to attain to a clear, judicious and saving knowledge of the true gospel of Christ.

8 Now as in former days *Jannes* and *Jambres* †, two famous magicians of *Egypt*, pretended to vie with *Moses* in working miracles, and set themselves up against him, who came with a divine commission to deliver the *Israelites* out of the house of bondage; so these false teachers set up themselves, and their errors, with pretences to miracles, in opposition to the plain truth of the gospel, and written word of God, and to the faithful servants of Christ, whom he has sent to preach deliverance to captives: and these deceivers, like those magicians, are men of depraved and vitiated minds, void of judgment, and utterly disapproved (*αποδοκιμασι*) and disowned of God, (see the note 2 Cor. xiii. 5.) as to every thing that relates to the pure doctrines of faith according to the gospel-revelation of them.

9 But it is a sweet support and comfort in the most perilous times, (*ver. 1.*) to be assured, as we may and ought to be, that these men, though permitted to proceed very far in their pretended miracles and delusions, are under a divine restraint, and shall certainly in God's time be put a stop to, and make no further progress; but shall be entirely confuted and overthrown to their own confusion, for (*αυτων*) the folly and madness of their sinful opinions: and their methods of management, shall at length be discovered with the plainest evidence to the whole world; even as the *Egyptian* magicians, after they had made a fair show of performing several miracles, were at length defeated, and exposed to open shame, and grievously tormented, in the contest, which *Moses*, the servant of the Lord, had with them, (*Exod. vii. 12. and viii. 18, 19. and ix. 11.*)

10 But, to guard you against all such seducers and their corrupt principles and practices of every kind, I would remind you of, and recommend to your imitation, what you have seen and experienced of a contra-

ry

#### N O T E.

† The names of *Jannes* and *Jambres* are not mentioned in any part of the Old-Testament; but are found, with a little variation of spelling, in several ancient Jewish writers, and are spoken of as the princes or chiefs of the magicians: Accounts of which are collected at large by Dr Hammond in his

notes on this place, and in the works of the learned Mr John Gregory: (Part I. Chap. 15.) And so the apostle, as may be supposed, takes these instances from Jewish writings, and argues from their own authors, that were currently received by that people.

ry. strain in my behaviour. You who have so much attended, and been so intimately acquainted with me, have fought after, and cannot but have attained to a thorough knowledge of the excellent doctrine according to godliness, that I have always taught; the course of my self-denying, holy, and religious conversation, agreeable to it; the sincerity and steadiness of my aims and pursuits for promoting the glory of God and the good of souls; my fidelity in preaching the pure gospel of Christ under the power of that faith, which I myself have in him, and endeavour to propagate to others; the forbearance and lenity I have all along shown toward the weak, the ignorant, and unteachable: the love I have shewn to God and Christ, and the souls and bodies of men, whether friends or enemies, and especially to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth; and the patience that I have exercised toward my most violent opposers, and under their most furious outrage against me.

10 Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

11 You have likewise fully known what severe persecutions, and extreme sufferings, to the utmost hazard of my life, I have undergone, with holy fortitude and composure, in various places for the gospel's sake, as particularly at *Antioch in Pisidia*, (Acts xiii. 14, 45, 50.) at *Iconium*, and at *Lystra*, two cities of *Lycania*, in the lesser *Asia*, (Acts xiv. 2, 5, 6, 19 \*) but, as you also well know, the Lord Jesus, whom I serve, and for whose cause I suffer, stood by me, supported and preserved me, and delivered me out of all those tribulations, in the last of which, namely at *Lystra*, he in a miraculous manner restored my life, after I was supposed to have been dead, (Acts xiv. 20.) in reflection therefore on those wonderful appearances of the Lord for me in all my troubles, you need not be afraid of sufferings for Christ; but ought to be encouraged to trust in him for all seasonable assistances and consolations, if you are called to endure the like.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

12 And indeed such is the wickedness and violence of the present and approaching days, and such the general corruption of human nature in all ages, that who-soever are desirous and determined, and accordingly make it their practice, to live after a truly religious manner,

#### N O T E.

† As Timothy was an inhabitant of *Lystra*, where Paul met with him, Acts xvi. 1. it is very probable that he was an eye-witness of the people's stoning the apostle there, till they thought he had been dead, and of his wonderfully reviving afterwards; or at least, he could not be ignorant of those notorious

facts in his own town; and the apostle here appeals to him about his troubles, not only at *Lystra*, but also at *Antioch* and *Iconium*, as to one that had fully known them upon the surest testimony, if not by ocular demonstration.

manner, in a holy profession of Christ's name, by virtue derived from him, after his example, and according to the rules of his word, they will be exposed to sufferings for his sake; and such is the appointment of God for making the members of Christ conformable to their head, who went through sufferings to glory, that all persons of this character must expect to meet with, ought to prepare for, and will certainly more or less, in one form or other, undergo persecutions from the hands or tongues of the seed of the old serpent, that is ever full of enmity against the church.

12 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

12 But men of wicked minds, under a form of godliness, and seducing impostors, are so far from submitting to sufferings for righteousness sake, that they will stick at nothing to avoid them, or to bring them upon others that do not fall in with their measures: They will be continually going further and further into violence, and wickedness, and all that is bad in principle and practice, doing what in them lies to draw others into erroneous and sinful paths; and being themselves wanderers from the truth, and the greatest deceivers of their own souls, as will most fully appear in the general apostacy of the last days under anti-christian-powers.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned, them;

14 But as for you, my dear son *Timothy*, whatever others do, See that you abide perseveringly, steadfastly and immoveably in the belief, profession, and preaching of the pure, uncorrupted and important doctrines of the gospel, which you have embraced, and been fully convinced of, upon the strongest and most satisfying evidence, as knowing by all the signs of apostleship, which have appeared in me, that I, of whom you have learned them, (*chap. i. 13. and ii. 2.*) am no less than an immediate commissioned servant of Jesus Christ, who have taught them by his express command, and by special revelation from him: and consequently, that you have learned them, by means of my ministry, from Christ himself, who is the *Amen, the faithful and true Witness*, and cannot possibly deceive you.

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

15 You also know, and are very well assured, that they are entirely consonant to the divine oracles of the Old Testament, which may well be called, by way of eminence and distinction from all human writings, *the Holy Scriptures*, as they were indited by the Holy Spirit, and delivered by holy men about holy things, (*2 Peter i. 21.*); and as they contain all the principles of holiness, with all directions, obligations, and motives to it, and are adapted, and blessed of God, to make

men holy here, in order to a state of complete holiness and happiness hereafter, In the knowledge of those sacred oracles, you have been educated from your very childhood up, by the diligent care of your pious mother and grandmother, (*chap. i. 5.*) who, as excellent examples to all Christian parents, brought you betimes to read and treasure them up in your memory, and to consider the meaning of them †; which, together with the gospel-revelation, as contained in the New Testament-writings now extant, are such a comprehensive system of divine things, as is every way sufficient, in the nature of means, and will be effectual, through the attending light and influence of the blessed Spirit, to make you emphatically wise; wise toward God and for your own soul: wise unto an understanding of the way, and taking the course, which the wisdom and grace of God have appointed in his word, for obtaining eternal life, not by the works of the law, but through that faith, which has Jesus Christ for its object, and is led to trust in him alone for all salvation.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

15 All the sacred writings, both of the Old and New Testament, are of divine original, as God, by his Spirit, directed and inspired the holy penmen to deliver them exactly according to truth; and they are all of great and excellent use and advantage, some in one way and others in another; either for revealing important doctrines concerning God and ourselves, our duty to him and one another, our state by nature and by grace, and the whole scheme of salvation thro' a Redeemer; or for reproving and convincing of sin and error, and of sinners and backsliders from the truth and holiness of the gospel; or for rectifying and reforming what is amiss

#### N O T E.

† *The holy scriptures*, which Timothy knew from a child, in all likelihood through the care and pains of his good mother and grandmother, must relate to the "Old Testament-scriptures; because none of the New Testament-writings were then extant: And yet these were sufficient to make him wise to salvation, through faith in the Messiah that was to come, 'till he was revealed; and when the New Testament was added to the Old, which Timothy by this time was acquainted with, they were sufficient to make him wise to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah, who had actually appeared, and fulfilled all the parts of his office on earth, that pertained to him as such: And if, during the state of the Old Testament-church, their scriptures were sufficient to make them wise to salvation, thro' faith in the promised Saviour; much more, thro'

faith in the "actually exhibited" Saviour, must all the inspired writings, taken together under the gospel-state, be so; most of the New Testament-writings having been extant before this epistle was sent to Timothy. Though therefore gospel-light undoubtedly far exceeds all that ever went before it; and though it cannot be said, that "every part" of scripture is "absolutely necessary" to be known in order to salvation; yet they are all profitable in their place, as infallible and inspired writings for excellent and important purposes: ver. 16. (See my "Standing Use of the Scriptures.") And now "the whole canon of scripture" is completed, under divine inspiration of the New, as well as of the Old Testament, there can be no need of the addition of any doctrines, or precepts, to direct our faith, or practice, that are not contained in them.

amiss; or for direction, in a way of faith and obedience, unto the obtaining of righteousness both for justification and sanctification, that we may be accounted righteous in Christ, and derive all renewing and purifying grace and assistance from him, for the performing of every duty, and making us holy in heart and life.

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

17 And these scriptures, taken altogether as exhibiting Old Testament-types and figures, prophecies and promises, and New Testament-light and accomplishments, and the plainest discoveries of Christ in his person and offices, and as prescribing duties of every kind, are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and contain all that can be necessary, not only to make a complete Christian, who, according to divine appointment, devotes himself, as such, to the service of God; but also a complete minister of Christ, whom God has set apart for himself to declare his mind and will to others; and so they are suited, in the nature of means, thoroughly to instruct, fit and furnish one, as well as the other, for a due understanding and performance of every good work that he is called to, relating to God, himself, and others.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

We need not wonder if our lot be cast in perilous times, either through the violence of persecutions, or through corruptions in doctrines and manners; since the word of God has foretold them. And, alas! How many selfish, worldly-minded, vain-glorious, proud, ungrateful and impious professors are there in our day, especially in the apostate church of *Rome*! How many have thrown off natural affection, and all obligations to filial and parental duty; and have given themselves up to falsehood, treachery, slander, rascality, insolence, and every furious and inordinate passion, and sensual pleasure, in preference to God himself! And how grievous is it, that any should indulge to all this under the mask of an external profession of godliness, while they are averse to its power in their hearts and lives; and that men of such corrupt minds should artfully insinuate themselves into, and captivate weak and ignorant people, who are governed and misled by sinful appetites, and are perpetually following new teachers and new things, and are so disconcerted thereby, as never to attain to a right knowledge of the truth of the gospel! The seducers of such are wicked men, and disapproved of God, as utterly destitute of true faith, whatever their pretences be; and therefore it behoves all ministers and Christians to have nothing to do with them in matters of religion. Blessed be God, that all their opposition to the gospel is under his controul; and that, tho' they may be permitted to run great lengths, they at last, like the *Egyptian*-magicians, shall be confuted, put a stop to, and exposed to open shame. But O what an engaging plan, of a contrary strain, have we in the great apostle's doctrine, manner of life, steady views to the honour of Christ and the good of souls; and in his faith and faithfulness, lenity, love and patience! Though he suffered the greatest persecutions; yet the Lord was with him in them, and amazingly delivered him out of them. What an encouragement is this to believers, and faithful servants of Christ, under any tribulation, which they may expect and meet with for his sake! While others therefore wax worse and worse, under the power of sin and error, how concerned should we be to continue steadfast in the faith, profession, and practice of those things, that we have learned from the apostle's, and other sacred writings of the Old and New Testament!

They are all inspired of God: Parents should early teach them to their children; and they are sufficient to make us wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, and to answer all the purposes of truth and holiness, of refutation of error, and reformation of manners, and of instruction in the way of righteousness, to the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls; and they are such a perfect rule of all that is to be believed and done, that ministers and people may find the whole compass of their duty in them, and be thoroughly fitted, by their means, for performing it, through divine light and grace in every instance here, till all be completed in a better world.

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle most solemnly charges Timothy to be diligent in his ministerial work, though many will not endure sound doctrine, 1,—5. Enforces the charge from a consideration of his own approaching martyrdom, which would have a glorious issue, 6,—8. desires him to come speedily to him, and bring Mark and certain mentioned things along with him, 9,—13. Cautions him against Alexander the copper-smith, and complains of such as had deserted him; but prays for them, and expresses his faith, as to his own preservation to the heavenly kingdom, 14,—18. and concludes with salutations and his usual benediction, 19,—22.*

## TEXT.

I Charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom:

## PARAPHRASE.

SINCE you are and will be surrounded with many adversaries, and are so richly furnished for maintaining the truth against them; and since all scripture, which you are so well acquainted with, is of divine original, and of such extensive use and advantage, as has been but now observed, (*chap. iii. 13,—17.*) I solemnly lay the following injunction upon your conscience, with regard to your faithfully discharging the work of an Evangelist, as in the sight and presence of the all-seeing God, and the heart-searching Saviour, (*Rev. ii. 23.*) and as you will answer it at the bar of the Lord Christ, and before him, when he shall come to judge all mankind, even all that shall be alive, or dead and raised again, at his glorious appearance, in the great day of account, and at his finishing the whole design of his mediatorial kingdom; and being revealed in all the glory of his heavenly kingdom, in which he, as God, together with the Father and Spirit, will reign, as in his essential kingdom, and in which he, as the Head and King of the church, will reign with a visible pre-eminence, and they shall reign in and with him, in all possible dignity, grandeur and delight for ever and ever. (See the note on *1 Cor. xv. 24.*)

\* Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season reprove, rebuke,

2 What I this awfully charge upon you, as with a religious oath, is this, proclaim aloud (*κρυψεν*) and with all authority and boldness, like one of Christ's heralds,

the



rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

the inspired word of God, as 'tis profitable for doctrine\*; preach it with earnestness and diligence on the Lord's days, and on other days, in times of peace and of persecution, in public and private, on stated and proper occasional opportunities, when 'tis more or less likely to do good, as one that sows his seed in the morning and in the evening, not knowing which shall prosper, (*Eccel.* xi. 6.): Apply the word, as there may be occasion, for reproof, to convince gainfayers of their errors; for reprehending sinners and backsliders, to reclaim and reform them; and for counselling, exhorting and encouraging believers, to go on in the way of righteousness: Insist on these various parts and uses of the word, with all meekness, patience, constancy and perseverance; and in a free open and faithful declaration of the whole counsel, of God, without adding to it, or taking from it, or altering and corrupting it, whatever difficulties, trials, and opposition you may meet with on that account.

3 For as already there begins to be; so in a little while, and yet more in process of time, there will be perilous days, when men of corrupt minds, as I have before warned you, (*chap.* iii. 1,—8, 13.) will be so nettled at the wholesome, pure, unmingled doctrine of the gospel, that they will not bear to hear it; but, being enraged against it, thro' their own pride, lusts, passions, and prejudices, will seek out, and multiply to themselves such false teachers, as shall tickle their ears with new notions, and unscriptural discourses, that please their fancies, and are agreeable to their own vitiated taste.

4 And through the love of novelty, that will gratify their curiosity and corrupt inclinations, they will turn a deaf ear to the truths of the gospel, and will eagerly listen after, and fondly embrace, every vain, empty, trifling, and senseless story, like *Jewish* fables and traditions, (*1 Tim.* i. 4.) to divert and amuse themselves, and keep their own consciences easy.

5 But as for you, my dear son *Timothy*, be upon your guard against all such sort of people and their errors; and watch for all opportunities of confuting them, and establishing the truth in opposition to them: Watch against all temptations; watch over your own spirit and conduct at all times, and in all circumstances; and watch for the souls of those that are committed to your care, (*Heb.* xiii. 17.): Submit with meekness to, and sustain

3 For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to me to be a reference to the several, uses of "the word or scripture," which had been specified, *chap.* iii. 16. and

therefore several passages in this verse are paraphrased in correspondence to that.

sustain with fortitude and patience, whatever tribulations your adversaries may bring upon you : Norwithstanding all their attempts to dishearten and silence you, go on in the name and strength of the Lord with your work, as an Evangelist; and thoroughly perform all the parts of your ministry with fidelity, care, and diligence, to the conviction of gainsayers, and approving yourself to the consciences of true believers. I give this as my final charge, that you may attend to it after I am dead and gone, and can no longer advise you, or help forward the work of the Lord with you.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

6 For, to allude to the *Jewish* libations, or pouring out of the wine upon their sacrifices, (see the paraphrase on *Phil.* ii. 17.) I am just on the point of pouring out my blood as a martyr for Christ, and (*ὡς σπινθήμα*) am already willing to be offered up, as a sacrifice, not of atonement, which Christ has perfectly made by the one offering of himself; but of acknowledgment, to the glory of God, and the confirmation of the gospel which I am going to seal with my blood \*; and I am fully assured, that the time of my dissolution, (*ἀναστας*) when my soul will depart from the body, and from earth to heaven, to be ever with the Lord, and when my body shall be dissolved into its original dust, is so near and certain, that it may be considered as if it were actually come to pass.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

7 In this situation I can look backwards and forward with the greatest pleasure: In a *review* of what the grace of God has done for me, and by me, I have the comfortable witness of his Spirit and of my own conscience, that I have been enabled, in a good degree, to war the best of warfares, in the best cause, even in the cause of Christ against all his, my own, and the church's spiritual enemies; and to behave like a good combatant against them, and like a good soldier of Jesus Christ, with courage, fidelity, and success in fighting his battles, under his banner, as the Captain of salvation: † I have held on my way thro' all the trials, labours and difficulties that I have been called to, as a minister and a Christian; have run with patience the race that was set before

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle speaks with confidence of his "departure as at hand," and might be fully satisfied, either by immediate revelation, or by what he had observed of Nero's temper and behaviour in his first apology, ver. 16. or had heard since, that he would be condemned to death, when he should be called forth to take his second trial.

† The terms used in this and the next

passage are agonistical, in allusion to the combats and race in the Grecian games: But as the life of ministers and Christians is often compared to a warfare, and the apostle had directed Timothy to "endure hardness" as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, chap. ii. 3. I have considered the first clause of this verse in that allusion also.

before me ; and have now in a manner compleated my course of life and obedience, sufferings and services ; and am got just to the goal : And from the beginning to the end of this combat and race, I have maintained the purity of the doctrines of what may be emphatically called *the faith*, (see *Jude*, ver. 3.) have lived by faith upon them, and been faithful in professing, publishing and defending them, and living answerable to them, for the glory of God, and the good of my own and other souls, *ver. 8.*

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

8 And the rich experience I have had of the grace of God, which has been with me, to assist, animate and succeed my labours, all along to the very close of life, (*1 Cor. xv. 10.*) raises my joyful hope and confidence, in *looking forward*, that what now remains is to receive the prize of the high calling of God, (*Phil. iii. 14.*) which is laid up in Christ, and reserved in heaven for me ; even a glorious *crown of life that fadeth not away*, (*James i. 12.* and *1 Peter i. 4.* and *v. 4.*) and is infinitely superior, in worth and dignity, to all the withering garlands and crowns of earthly conquerors ; and may be called a crown of *righteousness*, as it is given, on account of the Redeemer's merit, only to righteous persons, and consists in the perfection of all righteousness and true holiness, which I shall be made partaker of by the free gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, the impartial Judge of all, who proceeds upon principles of righteousness, in fidelity to his promises, and in making his rewards of grace, as well as of justice, according to the rule of his word, by sentencing impenitent sinners to everlasting punishment for their iniquities, and true believers to everlasting life for his own righteousness sake, at the great day of his coming to judge the quick and the dead, (*ver. 1.*) ; and he will give this glorious crown, not merely to me, as if no others were to be crowned besides me, but be assured, for the encouragement of your own soul, and of all his faithful followers and servants, that he will certainly do the same to every one, that realizes by faith, and with pleasure, and suitable preparation, waits, looks, longs and hopes for his second illustrious appearing, *when he will come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (*2 Thess. i. 10.*)

9 Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

9 In the mean while, lest it be soon too late, make all possible haste in coming to me, who greatly want to impart some further instructions to you, and should be much comforted to see you, as being now in a manner alone.

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica: Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas

10 For Demas, who has been a fellow-labourer, and might have been of service to me in my present difficult circumstances, has shamefully deserted me; he being afraid to run any risk in owning and standing by me, through too great a love of the ease, honour, safety and accommodations of this present insnaring world; and he of his own head, under the power of temptation, has retired to *Thessalonica*, the metropolis of *Macedonia*, where he hopes to get out of the danger he would be exposed to here †; *Crescens* is gone, with my approbation, on important affairs, to *Galatia*, as *Titus* also is to *Dalmatia*.

11 *Luke*, the beloved physician, (*Col.* iv. 4.) is the only fellow-labourer that remains, and chooses to be with me, and assistant to me: And as I should be glad to have the company of some other faithful brethren, I desire that when you come, according to my expectation and hope, you would bring *Mark* along with you, (see the note on *Col.* iv. 10.) for he may be of great service to me, in going on messages, and subserving my ministerial work, the little time I may have to live.

12 I greatly need his, as well as your assistance\*; for I have lately dispatched *Tychicus*, on urgent occasions, to my friends at *Ephesus*; and I dearly miss his company, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister in the Lord, (*Eph.* vi. 21.) and whom I have often sent on errands to various persons and churches, when I could not be with them myself. (*Acts* xx. 4, 5. *Col.* iv. 7. and *Tit.* iii. 12.)

13 The cloke which I left, when I was last at *Troas*, with our friend *Carpus*, might be of good use to me here

#### N O T E S.

† The apostle calls Demas his "fellow-labourer," (*Philem.* ver. 24.) and speaks of his joining in a salutation with *Luke* the beloved physician, (*Col.* iv. 14.) He therefore appears to have been a minister of some esteem formerly with the apostle, but a man of so timorous and worldly a spirit, as to forsake him in his difficult circumstance, under an apprehension of danger to himself, as the disciples did our Lord in the time of his extremity: However, we cannot certainly conclude concerning him any more than concerning them, that he turned utter apostate, though he, as well as they, acted a most unbecoming, unworthy and criminal part, under the power of temptation, and of too strong an attachment to this life and its concerns; accordingly the apostle sets a black mark upon him, in distinction from *Crescens* and *Titus*, of whom he only says, they were gone, one to *Galatia*, a province of the

lesser Asia, and the other to *Dalmatia*, a country in the southern part of *Illyria*, (see the note on *Rom.* xv. 1.) to which places he probably had sent them on some messages, or other business of considerable consequence. Who *Crescens* was is quite uncertain, we having no other account of him: But as he is here mentioned just in the same manner with *Titus*, it is probable he was a minister, and stood well in the apostle's esteem.

\* The particle (*et*) here rendered *and*, is sometimes causal, and translated *for*, as in *Luke* xiii. 48. *Acts* vii. 25, 1 *Thess.* ii. 16. and 1 *Tim.* iii. 5: and thus I think it may be taken in this place, as assigning a further reason of Paul's desiring *Mark*, as well as *Timothy* to come to him; or, perhaps, he sent *Tychicus* to *Ephesus* to supply *Timothy's* place, when he should come to Rome.

Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.

15 Of whom be thou ware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first an-

here †; therefore I beg you would take care to bring it with you, when you come to me, as also the several books which I left there; but, above all, fail not to bring the important parchments that are also in his custody.

14 Alexander the infamous copper-smith has been my bitter enemy; a most malicious instrument, who has falsely accused, and been very injurious to me. (See the notes on Acts xiv. 33. and 1 Tim. i. 20.) I leave him, as an utter and irreclaimable apostate, to the righteous judgment of God †, who will call him to a severe account, and recompense tribulation to him, according to the just desert of his evil deeds, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven to take vengeance on all his enemies and impenitent unbelievers, (2 Thess. i. 6,—9.)

15 I would therefore warn you to have a watchful eye as I have had, upon that man. Avoid him as an excommunicated person, (1 Tim. i. 20.) and take heed lest he serve you and others of the servants and people of God, as basely as he has me: For he has violently set himself against, and stiffly opposed the gospel of salvation, which I and you preach to all sorts of sinners, Gentiles as well as Jews, through faith in Christ Jesus.

16 When I was brought upon my first trial, and then made

#### N O T E S.

† I have taken the word (*παραστήσει*) in the sense of our translators to mean “a cloak,” which might be, either the pallium, that belonged to the apostle, as a Roman citizen; or an upper garment, which he usually wore at inclement seasons, and would need in a cold prison, as the winter was coming on: others take this word to signify “a roll,” and others a “bag, book-case, box, or chest,” or some repository in which Paul’s books and parchments were kept. And as the ancients had two sorts of books, one in the form of leaves and pages of parchment, or of paper made of the Egyptian Papyrus; and the other of like materials, rolled up when laid aside, and unrolled when opened for use. The books here mentioned seem to have been “the first, and parchments the “second” of these sorts of books, which, because rolled up, were called volumes. What was contained in them is both a curious and fruitless inquiry, that neither needs, nor can be satisfied: But as the apostle laid so particular an emphasis on the parchments, some have conjectured, that they might be the volumes of the Old Testament; others, the copy of his freedom as a Roman,

which might have been of use to him in his trial: others, the originals of the epistles, that he had sent to, or received from several churches, which he would have in Timothy’s custody. The apostle therefore ordered him to bring these things, that then lay in the hands of Carpus at Troas. As this is the only place where Carpus is mentioned, we know little of his character; but he seems to have been the apostle’s host at Troas, and a faithful brother, in whom he placed so much confidence, as to leave things, for which he had so great a value, under his care.

‡ The apostle probably knew by immediate revelation, that Alexander was a malicious, obstinate, and incorrigible enemy to Christianity, whom God had given up to hardness of heart: and therefore if he imprecated a due reward of his iniquity upon him, that is no rule for us to do the like on persons of whom we cannot have the same assurance: But some good copies read *the Lord (αγαθήν)* “will reward him according to his works.” (Vid. Mill. in Loc.) and so it is to be considered, not as an imprecation, much less as what the apostle desired: but a prediction of what would certainly befall him.

answer no man stood with me, but all men forsok me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

made my apology, (*απολογία*) in defence of Christ's and my own cause before the emperor, none of my Christian acquaintance, that were capable of being any way serviceable to me, had courage enough to own and countenance me, or to appear as witnesses on my behalf; but they all, through infirmity, cowardice, or fear of suffering, forsook me, as the disciples of our Lord did him, when he was apprehended in order to his being tried, condemned and crucified. (*Mat. xxvi. 56.*) I heartily wish, and earnestly pray, that, as he graciously forgave them, and brought them to repentance, he would forgive and recover these my brethren, and not impute this iniquity to them, or deal with them according to its deserts. (See the note on *ver. 10.*)

17 Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

17 However, while they through weakness and fear were permitted to desert me, the Lord Jesus himself, my almighty fast Friend, who is infinitely better than they all, owned and appeared for me, as his servant, and strengthened me with might by his Spirit in the inner man, to carry me above the fear of sufferings and death: And he was mouth and wisdom to me, to enable me to speak boldly for him in the face of his and my most powerful adversaries, that, by my apology at *Cesar's* bar, the tenor of my preaching the gospel might be thoroughly laid open to the whole court; and it might be thereby evident to all around me that it has no ill tendency for disturbing the civil government; and that my having preached it with so great success was not by human aid, but by the power of God as divinely assisting me, and giving the increase, (*1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.*) and particularly, that all the *Gentiles*, then present, might have an opportunity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, as sent unto them: And I was, at that time; as wonderfully preserved from imminent danger, as if I had been snatched out of the mouth of a lion, (see *Pf. xxii. 21.*) and was delivered from the rage and cruelty of *Nero* and his agents, who, like a roaring lion, under the influence of their father the devil, sought to devour and destroy me. (*John viii. 44.* and *1 Pet. v. 8.*)

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 And I am abundantly encouraged by his word, and the great experience I have had of his love and care thus far, to trust with an entire confidence in his power, faithfulness and grace, that he will keep me from doing any thing unworthy the Christian, or the minister, to save my life, or to get rid of the hottest per-

persecutions and terrors of mine enemies \* ; and that, whatever befalls me in my bonds, and in the issues of them, as to this world, he will do what is best for me, and will effectually secure me from apostacy, and from doing any iniquitous thing to his dishonour, and will enable me to persevere with faith and patience, and continue faithful to the death, till he shall receive me to live with him in the immortal dignity, grandeur and delights of his heavenly kingdom : To whom I cheerfully ascribe all possible honour and glory for what he is in himself, and has been, and will be to me ; To him it justly belongs, and ought to be paid henceforth and for ever more : *Amen*. So let it be ; and so I am confident it will be.

19 Salute Priscilla, and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

19 To draw towards a conclusion, I, as an aged dying friend and apostle, send all religious salutations to the eminently godly and benevolent *Priscilla* and *Aquila*, who are an honour to the Christian character, in the conjugal relation of wife and husband. (See the notes on *Acts* xviii. 26. and *Rom.* xvi. 3.) I also send the same to the pious family of *Onesiphorus*, who I know is absent from home ; and therefore does not send in like manner to him. (See the note on *chap.* i. 16.)

20 Erastus abode at Corinth : but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

20 Nor do I to *Erastus*, the chamberlain of the city, (see the note on *Rom.* xvi. 33.) who I also know is not in your parts, but carried at *Corinth* : Nor is *Trophimus* with you, whom I left sick at *Miletus* in *Crete*, when I came from thence ; and though I was heartily concerned for him, I had no suggestion, or power communicated to me, to work a miracle in healing him. (See the note on *Philip.* ii. 27.) Such is my affection to all these absent persons, that, were they near you, I should desire you to salute them also in my name.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

21 As no time is to be lost, and travelling will be incommodious at inclement seasons, I earnestly intreat you to try your utmost to get to me before the winter comes on. Our Christian friend and brother *Eubulus* sends his affectionate respects to you, as also do *Pudens* and *Linus*, and *Claudia*, and indeed all our brethren in Christ, that are in these parts, and know of my writing to you.

22 The Lord Jesus

22 My own heart's desire for you is, that our Lord and

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle cannot be supposed here to mean, that the Lord would deliver him from sufferings unto death, because he had sinned, with an assurance of his dying a martyr, that the time of his departure was at hand :

(ver. 6.) But he was confident that the Lord would deliver him from doing any sinful, unbecoming thing, contrary to faith and a good conscience, to preserve his life, or escape sufferings for Christ.

Jesus Christ be  
with thy spirit.  
Grace be with  
you. Amen.

and Saviour Jesus Christ may be ever with your spirit, to guide, support, strengthen, comfort and sanctify you. And my benediction to all the saints, together with you, is, May his free love or favour, and a sweet sense of it in all its precious fruits and effects, continually abound towards all and every one of you (*v. 10.*) In testimony of my desire and hope of this, I say, Amen.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

What need have ministers and others to be excited to their duty, in serious reflections on that awful day, when Christ will come in all the majesty and glory of his kingdom to judge the whole world, quick and dead, who must then give an account of themselves, and of all that they have done in the body to him! Great are the difficulties of fulfilling the ministerial charge in which Christ's servants are called to watch, and endure hardships; to preach the pure word of God in the whole compass of it, on all proper occasion, for the great purposes of instruction, rebuke, comfort and exhortation, with all long-sufferings and patience, under the neglect of friends, and opposition of enemies. But blessed be God, the encouragements of those, that desire to be faithful, are exceeding great. Tho' all men should forsake them, the Lord Jesus himself will stand by them; will assist and own them in their work! will appear for them in their tribulations; will keep them from chusing sin rather than sufferings; will ordinarily give them delightful reflections, at the close of life, on the grace that has enabled them to fight the good fight of faith; and will preserve them to his heavenly kingdom, and crown them, as conquerors, at the end of their race and warfare, by an act of righteousness on his own account, and of faithfulness to his word, as well as of mercy to them, at the great day. But, alas! How many are there, who sit under the ministry of the gospel, that cannot bear, but are swayed by the pride, corruption, and vanity of their own minds, to renounce the truth and holiness of sound doctrine, and to follow every novelty and new preacher, that please the fancy, instead of profiting their souls! How many others are there, that one would hope to be good people, who like *Demas* and other professors, are too much in love with life, and the concerns of it, and so weak in faith, and so much under the power of temptation, as to be afraid and ashamed to appear openly for Christ, and for his most eminent servants, in times of danger! The good Lord pardon all such, and recover them to a better and more courageous spirit! But as to those apparently malicious, obstinate and incorrigible enemies to Christ, and to ourselves for his sake, there is little or no room to hope, but that he will reward them according to the due desert of their wicked works: In the mean while, we ought to be upon our guard against them, lest we be injured by them in our religious principles, manners and views. But O happy souls! that sincerely and affectionately love Christ, and rejoice in the thoughts of his one day appearing, like himself, in all his glory, and that testify their love to him in doing all they can to promote his cause. They as well as his ministering servants, shall receive a crown of life in the day of judgment. With what cordial affection then should they greet one another, as Christian-brethren! And how earnestly wish and pray, that the Lord may be with their spirits; and that his grace, which is sufficient for them, may be manifested to and in them, and perform all things for them! In like returns of brotherly love, let every one say, Amen.



A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Epistle of the Apostle P A U L  
T O  
T I T U S.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

The Preface to the EPISTLE to TITUS.

**T**HIS Epistle to *Titus* is most generally thought to have been wrote after the *first*, and before the *second* to *Timothy*; tho' they (being wrote to the same person) are put together in the collection of the sacred canon. They were formed for the direction of *Timothy*, and this of *Titus*, as Evangelists, that were assistant to the apostle, and watered the churches which he had planted; and therefore the tenor and stile (as was to be expected) are much alike in this and those, especially the *first* of them, which cast a good deal of light upon one another; and are worthy the serious attention of all the ministers of the gospel, and New Testament-churches of every age, for whose use they were ultimately designed, as far as there might be any thing common, or similar, in their respective circumstances.

*Titus* was an early *Gentile* convert, (*Gal.* ii. 3.) probably under the apostle *Paul's* ministry, who, in language like that to *Timothy*, calls him *his own son in the common faith*, (*chap.* i. 4.); And having for a considerable time tried, and found him to be diligent and faithful in the improvement of the spiritual gifts that were communicated to him, in all likelihood by the imposition of the apostle's own hands, he at length advanced him from the state of a private Christian, or ordinary minister, to the high rank of an Evangelist; and left the care of the churches to him at *Crete*, that had been planted in several of its towns, or cities, by the apostle himself.

The particular *time* of the conversion of the *Cretians*, and of the apostle's leaving *Titus* with them, which is referred to, *chap.* i. 5. and in what *particular year* of our Lord, as also *from whence*, and by what

*messenger* this epistle was sent, is variously disputed by the learned with great uncertainty; and, as far as I see, to little profit: But it appears from *chap. i. 5.* and *iii. 12.* to be past dispute, that it was wrote by the apostle *Paul* to *Titus*, while he was at liberty, and *Titus* was doing the work of an evangelist at *Crete*, which is all that is necessary for establishing our belief of its divine authority.

*Crete*, which is now called *Candia*, from the name of its principal city, and is under the dominion of the *Turks*, is one of the finest islands for size, air, and soil in the *Mediterranean*; but its ancient natives were infamous to a proverb for *lying*; and were much addicted to several other vices, according to the account that *Epimenides*, one of their own celebrated poets, gave of them, which the apostle recites, and calls a true one, *chap. i. 12.* And as there were very active Judaizing Christians among the converts of this island, it is not much to be wondered at, that a people of so bad a *constitutional* temper, and so lately brought to the faith of Christ, were in danger of being ensnared by their artful insinuations: And as too many of them had been perverted by their means, and adversaries to the pure gospel were still very busy among them, the apostle sent this epistle to furnish *Titus* with some farther directions how to behave in that critical situation, than he had given while he was with him, and before any thing of that kind had appeared among them.

After the introduction, in which he attests his own apostolic authority to give a divine sanction to what he wrote, rather for obviating objections to *Titus's* acting according to it, than for his own satisfaction, who could have no doubt about it; he reminds him, that the chief design of his leaving him at *Crete* was to carry on the begun work of God, and ordain faithful and able pastors of the churches there, whose qualifications he describes much in the same manner as in *1 Tim. iii. 2,—7.* And whose assistance would be needful to confute the judaizing deceivers, that were labouring to corrupt the faith and holiness of the gospel. *Chap. i.* Then in opposition to those sticklers for ceremonial rites, he advises *Titus* to preach with such authority in the name of Christ as should raise him above contempt; and to recommend, by his own example, such a religious and moral behaviour of younger and older believers of both sexes, as, suitable to their respective ages, might be becoming sound doctrine, and persons professing godliness: And, in opposition to those, that would cancel the obligation of Christian servants to their unbelieving masters, he bids him exhort them to behave with good-humour and faithfulness, in fulfilling the duties of their relation to them, for the credit of the gospel, which teaches all holiness in every station of life, and encourages the practice of it by the joyful hopes of perfect happiness at Christ's glorious appearing; and shews that the very end of his redemption was to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, *chap. ii.* and in opposition to those that were for paying no regard to heathen magistrates, he recommends it to *Titus*, to remind all sorts of professing Christians of their obligations to be obedient to their civil governors;

to be ready to every good work; to be inoffensive and courteous toward people of all ranks, and characters; and enforces this from considerations of what they themselves were in their natural state, and of the happy change that was made upon them, by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit; and their justification to eternal life. These *Titus* was to insist upon, as the most powerful and evangelical motives to believers to act up to character, in practising every thing that is good in itself, and useful to others; and was to avoid the empty, vain-jangling disputes of judaizers, and to respect self-condemned heretics, after a first and second admonition. Having now finished the main body of his epistle, he adds an order for *Titus* to come to him at *Nicopolis*, where he proposed to spend the winter; and to provide all proper accommodations for *Zenas* and *Apollos*, whom he was to take in his way to him: And concludes with a general exhortation to all the professors of Christ's name, to attend to the duties of their places; with salutations to *Titus*, and to their Christian friends, and with his apostolic benediction to them all. *Chap. iii.*

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle asserts his character, salutes Titus and reminds him of the work, for which he had left him at Crete, 1,—5. Draws out the qualifications of a faithful pastor, 6,—9. And describes the evil temper and practices of judaizing false teachers, that ought to be confuted, 10,—16.*

## PARAPHRASE:

**TEXT.**  
**P**AUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

**P**AUL, the inspired writer of this Epistle, is, and counts it his honour, as a Christian and a minister, to be the devoted servant of the ever-blessed God, under the strictest and most inviolable bonds to him; and, though utterly unworthy in himself, he is still more highly dignified with the title and commission, qualifications, and powers of an extraordinary messenger, sent and instructed immediately by Jesus Christ, to bear witness to him, and preach his gospel of salvation, in all its extent, to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, according to the doctrine of faith, which is embraced by, and is the means of working effectual faith in God's own people, whom he originally made so, by his special, distinguishing, and eternal choice, (*Ephes. i. 4.*) and according to their knowledge, approbation, and confession of its infallible truth, which is suited, designed, and made effectual unto them, for promoting the principles and practice of real goodness in heart and life, as consisting of a sincere and devout performance of all religious duties, with a holy reverence, fear, and adoration of, trust in, and unreserved obedience to God, through Jesus Christ.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

2 This truth is believed and professed, with a corresponding practice of godliness, by them, in the exercise of a lively hope of an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of eternal life, to which God, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten them, (1 *Pet.* i. 3, 4.); and which he, who cannot possibly be false or deceiving, but may as soon cease to be God, as cease to be true and faithful, has promised to Christ their Head for them, and to them, as federally comprehended in him, before the earliest date of time, even from all eternity, before any dispensations of grace commenced; and has given a specimen of, in the first promise after the fall, (*Gen.* iii. 15.) before any of the *Jewish* ages began. (See the note on 2 *Tim.* i. 9.)

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

3 But which in the fulness of time, according to his eternal purpose, he has now clearly made known by the publication of his gospel, which is revealed, and committed, as a trust, in a special manner to me, his servant and apostle, (*ver.* 1.) to dispense it to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, according to the express appointment and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, (*Acts* xxii. 17,—21. and xxvi. 15,—18.) who is indeed God our Saviour, as by his incarnation he became Emmanuel, God with us, and gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, (*chap.* ii. 13, 14. see the note there.)

4 To Titus mine own son after the common faith: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

4 I, who am thus divinely inspired, and commissioned, send this Epistle to you, by beloved Titus, who is as dear to me as any child can be to his own father, and are indeed in a spiritual sense my genuine son, as I was the instrument of begetting you to Christ, and bringing you both to the doctrine and grace of faith in him, which is common to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and to you and me; I heartily wish and pray, that the divine favour, tender compassion, and all manner of blessings for time and eternity, as included in the comprehensive term *peace*, may abound toward you from God the Father, as the fountain of all good, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, as the revealer, purchaser, and giver of it, who, in the execution of his office, is emphatically *our Saviour*.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

5 Now, to remind you of the end for which I told you I left you at *Crete*, when I last came from thence, you know it was, that you might carry on the good work begun there, and set to rights such things as are defective, or remain unfinished, with regard to doctrine, worship, discipline, and manners, in the churches which are planted in that island; and particularly

larly that, in order hereunto, you, as an Evangelist and my deputy, might preside in solemnly setting apart, and constituting bishops or pastors, (*ver. 7.* see the notes on *Acts* xx. 28. and *1 Pet.* v. 2.) that should be chosen by common suffrage to reside stately among, and take the oversight of the several churches in every town, or city, where they are seated; and to feed them with knowledge and understanding, (*Jer.* iii. 15.) according to the orders I gave, and in the manner I prescribed to you, before I took my leave of you.

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

6 As to the qualifications of a person that is fit and worthy to be invested with that office, He ought to be one of an unspotted reputation in his moral character, among his Christian acquaintance, and all around him, (*1 Tim.* iii. 27.); one that is clear from the sin polygamy, as never being married to more than one wife at a time; and of causeless divorces, according to the corrupt custom of the *Jews*, (see the note *1 Tim.* iii. 2.) And, if he have children, see that he be one who brings them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and manages them with such prudence and authority, as, by the blessing of God, may be the means of winning them over to the faith of Christ, and to a faithful profession of his name, and discharge of all the duties of their civil and religious relations; and who never suffers any of his children to behave at such a rate, as shall fix upon them a brand of luxurious and dissolute, or of refractory, ungovernable, and disobedient youths, (*ἀνυπακούοντες*) in their temper and manners, to the disgrace, not only of themselves, but of their fathers, and the gospel.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

7 For the nature of a pastor's or Christian bishop's office, the honour of religion, and the good of others, as well as of his own soul, require, that he be under no reproach or scandal in his life and conversation, or on account of any neglect or unfaithfulness in the discharge of his trust, as a steward of the mysteries of God, to dispense them impartially and without reserve, that every one of Christ's family, under his ministerial inspection, may have his portion in due season; and he ought not to be of a head-strong, conceited, obstinate, inflexible temper; nor one of a hasty spirit; that takes fire at every little provocation, and presently falls into a passion; nor one that loves, and is addicted to immoderate drinking of strong liquors; nor contentious and violent in his behaviour, ready to fall foul upon them that displease him; nor one of a niggardly, sordid, covetous spirit, that is for getting all he can, and for keeping

keeping all he gets of the defiling pelf of this world; and, like a mercenary hireling, values the fleece more than the flock, and would take no pains in his work, were it not for a prospect of secular gain to himself.

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

8 But he ought to be a man of a liberal soul, that devises liberal things, and, according to his ability, takes pleasure, on all proper occasions, in acts of benevolence to religious strangers, as well as neighbours and acquaintance, especially to ministers and Christians, that either go about to preach the gospel, or are driven from house and home, by the violence of persecutions. He ought to be a lover and encourager of good things, and to have a cordial affection to all sincere, honest, good, and pious men, without exception; and to be himself modest and humble, grave and prudent, in his carriage; upright and faithful in all that he says or does; exemplarily holy in all manner of conversation and godliness; chaste and moderate in his desires, appetites, and pursuits of the pleasures of this life.

9 Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

9 He likewise ought to be one that is well established in the great truths of the gospel, that holds them fast in his own faith and profession of them, and holds them forth in his ministry, and is steady in maintaining them, as the true and faithful sayings of God, which are to be believed and adhered to, just according to what he has been taught, and has learned from inspired writers, of *the faith which was once delivered to the saints*, (Jude, ver. 3.) that he may be capable of explaining, supporting, and defending the pure, uncorrupted, wholesome doctrine of Christ; and, by a due and proper application of it, (*παρακαλῶν*) to administer comfort to believers, and excite them to their duty; and to confute the errors of all opposers, silence their cavils, and rebuke their perverseness.

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision:

10 For, as in several other places, so, I understand, among the professors at *Crete*, there are abundance of pretenders to Christianity, that are (*ἀνυπακούτοι*) refractory and disorderly not submitting to any divine rule, in doctrine or manners; and they are most pernicious, proud, self-conceited disputers, with vain jangling about empty things, to no good purpose; and crafty, sly seducers of the minds of the simple; I in a special manner have my eye upon the *Jewish* party among them, that make a profession of Christ, and yet contend for circumcision and other rites of the law of *Moses*, as necessary to salvation.

11 Whose mouths may be stopped, who have no conscience to their shame, who oppose themselves to the

11 For opposing such as these, It is highly necessary that pastors or Christian bishops be able ministers of the

subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

the New Testament; and all possible fair means, by scriptural proofs, solid arguments, and good example, ought to be used for confuting and silencing those vain boasters, and deceitful workers, who are so indefatigable, subtle, and specious in their pretences, as to insinuate themselves into Christian families, (2 Tim. iii. 6.) and carry them off, as it were by wholesale, from the pure doctrines of the gospel to *Meses*; urging things unreasonably upon them, that are utterly false, and absolutely inconsistent with the true way of salvation by Christ alone; which they do for the sake of heaping to themselves the sordid, desling treasures of this world, by methods that are suited to impose upon such an infamous sort of people as the *Cretians*, \* and that are agreeable to their own character, as such.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The *Cretians* are always liars, evil beasts, slow bel-  
 lies.

12 For one of their own countrymen, a celebrated *Greek* poet, which sprung from among themselves, and thoroughly knew their national temper, even *Epimenides* by name, whom they esteem as a prophet, and who, as a poet, is customarily called a prophet; He says, in a description of the natives of *Crete*, that they are naturally a set of scandalous people, ever addicted to falsehood and lying; fly and savage in their temper, like wild beasts; perfect gluttons in indulging their ravenous appetites, and, as is common for persons of such a luxurious turn, exceeding lazy and backward to every useful employment, and so exposed to all sorts of temptations.

13 This witness is true: wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith;

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

13, 14 And truly this is a just testimony against them, as has been proved in numberless instances, and too plainly appears by the perfidious, mischievous, and sensual management of the Judaizing Christians, and of those that fall in with them at this very day: It behoves you therefore to deal plainly and squarely with a people of such a vile and brutish temper, with whom mildness will not do; but who must be cut to the quick, in laying before them their sin and danger, with due severity, that neither the deceivers, nor the deceived, may dare any longer to persist in their evil principles and practices; but may be recovered to a right mind, and settled in the true and uncorrupted doctrines of faith; and may be so entirely brought over to them, as never more to listen after, attend to, or believe

#### N O T E.

\* If, as is very probable, these deceivers themselves were *Cretians*, the apostle with good reason seems to suggest that they as-  
 sume themselves in all their self-seeking and

deceptive arts, and that the people they had to do with, were fit materials, prepared ready to their hands, for them to work upon, as appears from the following account of them.

believe and be carried away with, the fallacious stories that the *Jews* tell of their traditions, and with the imperious injunctions of men, that are prejudiced against, and gone off from the truth of the gospel, and insist on an observance of ceremonial rites, such as relate, among others, to meats and drinks, and persons and things, that were clean or unclean, according to the distinctions of the Levitical law; but are no longer obligatory under the New Testament-dispensation.

15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

15 Unto real Christians, whose hearts are purified by faith, and consciences purged by the blood of Christ, all things that God hath not forbidden under the gospel-state may be lawfully esteemed clean, and may be touched and eat, without the least moral defilement; and they have a sanctified use of them: But unto those that are unregenerated, and under the power of sin, and of unbelief with respect to gospel-truths, and that adhere to Mosaical institutions, instead of cleaving to Christ alone: Unto such, whatever their pretences be to Christianity, nothing, no, not things that are most lawful and good in themselves, can be clean and pure; nor can they use them without sin and defilement; the reason of which is, because even their understandings and consciences themselves, those leading and directive powers of the soul, are sadly misguided and corrupted.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

16 They indeed make high professions, and boast of their knowledge of the true God, and of the revelation of his mind and will, as though they herein excelled all others; (*Rom. ii. 17,—20.*) But their practices are a direct contradiction to, and confutation of all such pretences: They, in effect, deny by their deeds, what they affirm in words, being, in reality, most detestable enemies to God and godliness; and, giving no credit to the gospel-revelation, they are disobedient to his authority in it, and utterly injudicious, and unapt for the performance of any good work; and so are highly disapproved of God, and *reprobate silver shall men call them; because the Lord hath rejected them.* (*Jer. vi. 30.* see the note on 2 *Cor. xiii. 5.*)

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

With what readiness of mind, and sense of duty, should ministers and private Christians, in their respective places, pay a conscientious regard to the inspired directions of the great apostle of the *Gentiles*; whose authority is divine, and whose benevolent wishes were for grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ! How much soever others may despise, or corrupt the gospel, God's elect will embrace and own it, as calculated, and rendered effectual in them, for promoting the practice of godliness: And when they experience its holy effects upon themselves, what a support is it to their hope of everlasting life, which the unchangeably faithful and true God promised to Christ for them,

and



and to them in him, before all worlds; and has now made known with the clearest evidence, in the gospel-revelation, and by the ministry of it! With what cautious care, and attention to due qualifications, should they proceed, who are engaged in setting persons apart to the pastoral office in the churches of Christ, according to apostolical appointment! And how concerned should such pastors themselves be, that their moral characters be clear; that, if they are married, it be but to one wife at a time; and that the children, which God may give them, be orderly, and trained up in the faith of Christ, and not chargeable with riots, or refractory disobedience; that they themselves be neither humourously obstinate, nor passionate, nor litigious, nor tiplers, nor covetous; but generous and hospitable: lovers of all good men, and of every good thing; grave and prudent, just and righteous toward men, holy and religious toward God, chaste and temperate in all things; and that they hold fast the true doctrine of Christ in their faith, profession, and preaching, just as they received it from him and his apostles, and be such masters of it, as to be able to maintain and defend it against all opposition, and to apply it for duty and comfort, like good stewards of the household of faith! With what diligence should they endeavour, not by force, but by scripture and reason, to silence obstinate, self-conceited vain boasters and deceivers, that turn away from the truth, and pervert multitudes by their false notions, to enrich themselves with sordid and defiling gains! And with what just severity (when milder methods fail) should they reprove such professors, as, like the *Greeks*, are perfidious, brutish, luxurious, and idle, that they may be brought to reject all fabulous traditions, and impositions of men upon conscience, and may be sound in the faith! Ah! How wretched is the case of formalists in religion, who are neither cleansed from their sins, nor have true faith in Christ; whose evil practices contradict their verbal professions, and proud boasts of superior knowledge of God, and of his mind and will! They, at the same time, are odious in his sight, as their minds and consciences are defiled, and as they neither believe nor obey the gospel-revelation, and are utterly void of judgment, and of holy dispositions for any good work. But what a mercy is it to be pure and upright in heart, through the cleansing virtue of the blood and spirit of Jesus! To persons of the former character every thing is defiling; but to those of the latter, all lawful things are sanctified for their use, and may be improved to the glory of God, and the good of their own souls.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle directs Titus to inculcate such duties upon younger and older Christians, as are becoming sound doctrine, and to be exemplary in them himself, 1,—8. To enjoin believing servants to be obedient to their masters for the honour of the doctrine of Christ, which they profess, 9, 10. And to enforce all this from a consideration of the holy design of the gospel, from the prospect it gives of heavenly glory, and from the end of Christ's death, which equally concern believers of all ranks and stations, and are to be urged upon them with all becoming authority, 11,—15.*

## TEXT.

**B**ut speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

## PARAPHRASE.

**M**ANY are the deluding and deluded people of corrupt minds and manners, that surround you, which have been spoken of, (*chap. i. 10,—16.*) But, in opposition to them, let it be your special care to preach and insist upon such doctrines and duties as are agreeable to, and put an honour upon the solid, pure, whole,

some, and healing gospel of Christ, which is a doctrine according to godliness, (*chap. i. 1. and 1 Tim. vi. 3.*) and lays the highest obligations to holiness and obedience upon all its professors, of what age, sex, or station soever they be.

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience:

2 Put the more elderly Christian brethren in mind, that, suitable to their age and profession, they ought to be (*μεταλξις*) very watchful, circumspect, and sedate in their temper and carriage; to behave with a venerable gravity (*σεμνως*) and due decorum in their dress, mien, and air, and in all that they say and do; to be prudent (*σως*) in their conduct, and temperate in eating and drinking; uncorrupt, as to the doctrines of faith, and sincere in believing them, and living answerable to them; abounding in love to God, in cordial affection to all the saints for his sake, and in Christian benevolence to people of all nations, ranks, and characters, as fellow-creatures; and to be patient under tribulations and offences, and in subduing their own peevish passions, and bearing with the infirmities of others \*.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things:

3 Inculcate also upon religious elderly women, that they ought to be exemplary (*ἡ καταμνηστρις*) in dress, and all regular deportment, as becomes such holy professors; and to take great heed that they be not, like the devil himself, (*διαβολος*) false accusers, slanderers, or backbiters of others, to the injury of their reputation; nor inclined, much less given up, to any excess of drinking wine, or other intoxicating liquors, under pretence of recruiting the strength and spirits of a decaying nature; and that, instead of amusing young people with old wives fables, (*1 Tim. iv. 7.*) they should entertain them with profitable discourse, and recommend, by counsel and example, every thing, that is good and laudable, as to speech, apparel, and behaviour:

4 That they may teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

4, 5 Particularly, that they should instruct, and endeavour to influence, younger women to be wise, and cautious of every thing that savours of lewdness or lightness; and if they be married, to carry themselves in an affectionate and endearing manner toward their husbands, being in heart for them, and for no other man; and, according to the dictates of nature and religion, to be concerned for the happiness of such children

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own

#### N O T E.

\* Some have thought, that aged men and women, in this and the next verse, are meant of church officers, such as elders and deacons: But as young men and women, and not private Christians, are mentioned by way of distinc-

tion from them, ver 4, 5, 6. the context determines the reference to elderly persons, as superiors; and elders in office had been distinguished in the preceding chapter.

own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed,

children as God may graciously give them, and to show their love to them, not with a foolish fondness, to the neglect of needful reproof, or corrections for their faults, as there may be occasion, which, in effect, would be hating, instead of loving them, (*Prov. iii. 24. and xxiii. 13, 14.*) but with a prudent, solid, Christian-like tenderness and kindness, to encourage them in every thing that is good, and to do all that in them lies for their temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare: As also to manage every thing with discretion; to be modest and virtuous with all purity of manners; to be careful and industrious housewives, not gadding about like idle busy-bodies, (*1 Tim. v. 13.*) but keeping as much as may be at home, and minding the affairs of their families; to be meek and good-tempered towards their servants, and all they have to do with; and to pay due respect and obedience, in all lawful things, to their husbands, that they may never give the least occasion for any to speak reproachfully of the words or ways of God, as though these encouraged any disorderly practice.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

6 In like manner, advise and excite young men, professing Christianity, to be considerate, chaste, meek and sober; and to maintain a due government of their temper and passions, which are apt to be too warm and impetuous, rash, proud, wilful, and frolicsome, at their blooming age.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

7, 8. And if you would have these things believed and practised by others, Be especially careful to draw them out to the life, and recommend them in your own behaviour, by being yourself an exact pattern of every thing that is good and excellent in itself, and beneficial to men: And, in all your preaching, deliver nothing but the pure, unmixed doctrine of Christ, with disinterested single aims at the glory of God and the good of souls; with becoming seriousness and venerable gravity; and with all simplicity and godly sincerity; and in such scriptural, easy, and significant language, as is suited to convey your ideas in a plain, determinate meaning, according to the truth of the gospel; and as shall neither mislead your hearers, nor be justly objected to, either for its ambiguity, obscurity, or falshood; that so your most critical, carping, and cavilling enemies may even blush and be confounded, as finding that there is no room for the reproaches, and invidious charges of error in doctrine, or misdemeanor in practice, which they were endeavouring to fasten upon you and your followers.

9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again,

9 And whereas there are some Judaizers, who would persuade such converted slaves, as are the property of heathen ministers, that it is not lawful for them to continue in their service, You ought to guard against such an incroachment on civil rights; and press upon all believing servants, whether slaves or others, the duty of continuing, as much as ever, and upon better principles than ever before, to be obedient in all lawful things to their earthly masters, *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*, (1 Pet. ii. 18.) and to endeavour to behave in such a courteous, obliging, and diligent manner, as shall win their favour, and give them a great deal of pleasure in seeing all their just and reasonable commands executed: And exhort servants to be so well satisfied with their station and the duties of it, as cheerfully to attend to them, without murmuring, or disputing against them, or returning rude and saucy answers, when they are ordered to do any thing they do not like, or are reprov'd for their faults.

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

10 And charge them to be strictly just and honest, (see *Ephes.* vi. 5, 6. and *Col.* iii. 22, 23.) never daring to waste embezzle, or secrete to their own use, any of their master's goods, money, or provisions, beyond his allowance of what is fit and needful for them; but always to be approving themselves, as good and faithful servants, that punctually obey his orders, and do the best they can for his honour and advantage, like persons that make his interest their own; (*scilicet*) to the end that they may be a credit to the gospel, and to their holy profession of it, and may thereby strike conviction upon the consciences of their infidel masters themselves, as well as others, of the excellency, purity, and power of the doctrine of the blessed God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, (*ver.* 13. see the note there) with regard to all civil and moral, as well as religious duties, in every relation of life.

11 For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;

11 For the gospel of the grace of God, particularly under the New Testament-dispensation of it, (*Ephes.* iii. 2.) which is the effect of his free favour, and reveals it to us; and is the means of working grace in our hearts, as it brings glad tidings of deliverance from sin and wrath, and of eternal happiness through Jesus Christ, and shows the way of obtaining this great salvation by faith in him, has now shone forth in all its light and glory, (*scilicet*) like the rising sun, upon all nations to whom he ordered it to be preached, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. *Mark* xvi. 15. and upon all sorts of the sinful sons and daughters

daughters of men, whether *Jews* or *heathens*, young or old, masters or servants, (*ver. 2,—9.*)

11 Teaching us, that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

12 And its great and holy tendency and design, together with its effectual working in those of us who believe, is to teach and oblige us, whatever our civil stations be, that, renouncing, abhorring and utterly forsaking all infidelity, idolatry, and impiety of every kind, contrary to *the first table* of the moral law; and all irregular inclinations and desires, contrary to *the second table*, which consist in *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, (1 John ii. 16.) and which worldly minded men indulge and gratify, and place their happiness in; that, abandoning and detesting all these, we should be wisely careful to lead a life of purity and sanctity, in a due government of our passions and appetites; in a just, honest, equitable and benevolent behaviour toward men, doing by them as we would be done by, (*Luke vi. 31.*); and in all acts of publick and private worship and devotion toward God, according to his word, in the exercise of every grace and celebration of all his ordinances, and observation of all his commandments, as long as we continue in this present world of sin, temptation, and snares.

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

13 And it teaches, encourages, and animates us to do all this, by the most constraining motives, as persons who look with an eye of faith, and wait with earnest expectation and longing desire, and yet with submissive patience, for the perfect, all-comprehending, and everlasting felicity of the heavenly state, in the immediate presence of Christ, which is the great object of our joyful hope; and for the illustrious appearing of the great and mighty God, (*Isa. ix. 6.*) \* even our dear Lord, Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, at his second coming without sin to salvation, (*Heb. ix. 28.*) will appear

#### N O T E.

\* It seems to me, that our "Lord Jesus Christ," is meant by "God our Saviour," *ver. 10.* he being, most strictly speaking, *the Saviour*, and most frequently styled in the New Testament *our Saviour*, and very often God; and may be considered, as there distinguished from God the Father, whose gospel of grace is said to have appeared to all men in the next verse: However, I am well satisfied, that he is meant here by *the great God, and*, or as I think it might be better rendered, "*even our Saviour Jesus Christ*;" because the article in the Greek is prefixed to *the great God*, and not repeated before "*our Saviour Jesus Christ*," in which position of the article the last title is usually, though not

always, exegetical of the first, to intimate that they both belong to the same subject, (see the note on *1 Thess. i. 1.*); and in all the New Testament *the Father* is never said to appear: But we often read of "the appearing" of our Lord Jesus Christ" to judgment, which is represented, as what will be exceeding glorious; and he is spoken of, by way of emphasis, as *our hope*, and *the hope of glory*, (*Col. i. 17.* and *1 Tim. i. 1.*); and though Christ will come in his Father's as well as his own glory; yet it is not *the person* of the Father, but of *the Son*, that will then come, and make his appearance. *Col. iii. 4.* and *1 Pet. v. 4.* (See my discourse on *Jesus Christ God-man*, pag. 58, 59.)

pear on his throne of judgment, like himself, in all the majesty, beauty, grandeur, and brightness of his divine and mediatorial glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of all his holy surrounding angels, (*Mat. xvi. 27. and xxv. 31. and Mark viii. 38.*) and will come to *be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,* (*2 Thes. i. 10.*)

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

14 And what may we not look and hope for from him, who loved us, at so high, matchless, and astonishing a rate, as freely to devote and give up his own great self, soul and body, to the most painful and ignominious death of the cross? This he willingly suffered for our sakes, and in our room and stead, (*1 Pet. iii. 18.*) that he might effectually redeem us by his blood from the power and tyranny, as well as from the guilt and punishment, of all our sins, and at length from the inn-being of them; and might sanctify, cleanse, and separate us to himself for sacred use, and for his glory, as his special, precious, and peculiar property, by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and our own free and full consent in the day of his power, that we might be zealously affected towards him and his cause, and fervent in spirit to serve him in the performance of every work, which in its own nature, or by his appointment, and in his account, is good and honourable, as being done upon good principles to good ends, and in a right manner, according to the good rule laid down in his word.

15 These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

15 These are things of so vast importance, and are so vehemently opposed, or corrupted by the enemies of Christ and his gospel, that you ought to be very earnest in preaching and inculcating them, and in sharply reproving the men and their errors and vices, that set themselves against them; and you should do this with all the authority that Christ has given you in the execution of your office. All this ought to be managed with such prudence, faithfulness, and gravity, as shall raise you, and your office, above the contempt of your most scornful and haughty enemies.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How carefully should ministers adhere to, preach and apply the pure doctrine of the gospel, and the duties that are answerable to it, for exhortation, consolation, and reproof, as there may be occasion; and do this with such gravity, sincerity, faithfulness, and authority in the name of Christ, and with such plain scriptural language, and exemplary behaviour in their own lives, as shall raise them above contempt, and make their enemies ashamed of their endeavours to reproach them! The duties, as well as doctrines of Christianity, are to be taught and urged, not only in a general way, but with particular application, as occasions require, to believers of all circumstances and conditions; to aged men and women, that they may

be grave, serious, temperate in all things, sound in the faith, instructive and exemplary in every grace, as becomes persons of their standing in years, and in their holy profession; to younger people of both sexes that they may be prudent, chaste, and temperate, and may be wise and affectionate in discharging the duties of their respective relations; and to servants of all ranks, that they may study to please their earthly masters of every character; and may be obedient to their just commands, faithful, industrious, and strictly honest, in managing all their affairs, and not pert and arrogant in giving word for word: Such behaviour reflects an honour upon their Christian profession, and the gospel of the grace of God. And O what a blessed gospel is this! It teaches, and obliges the professors of it, to abandon all irreligion and profaneness, and all inordinate inclinations to the pleasures and honours of this world; and to live in the practice of all sobriety, honesty, and piety; and it encourages them to look and hope for the heavenly happiness; which shall be brought to every true believer at the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is the great God and their Saviour; and who gave himself to death for them, that he might redeem them from the guilt and dominion, and at length from the remainders of all sin, and might sanctify them for himself, as a peculiar people, zealously devoted to God, and cheerfully abounding in all good works to his praise and glory.

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle goes on to give orders about obedience to civil magistrates, and a becoming behaviour towards all men, 1, 2. Inforces them from a consideration of what believers themselves were before conversion, and are made to be, through Jesus Christ, by regenerating and justifying grace, 3,—7. Puts Titus upon urging these things, to the end that good works may be praised by believers, and upon avoiding vain and useless disputes, 8, 9. Insists on his rejecting a heretic, after due admonition, 10, 11. Desires that he would come, and bring Zenas and Apollos with him, to Nicopolis, recommends good works for necessary purposes, 12,—14. And concludes, as usual, with salutations, and a benediction, 15.*

## TEXT.

PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

## PARAPHRASE.

AS Judaizing zealots endeavour to dissuade Christians from owning the authority of heathen governors, you ought to guard them against an error, so contrary to the design of the gospel, and destructive to the political state, and to the civil power of rulers over it: Let therefore all the professors of Christ's name be admonished of their duty, to be peaceably submissive to supreme and subordinate governors, (1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.) and to pay a conscientious obedience to all the just laws of civil magistrates, who, whether they be Christians or not, are ordained of God for the good of the community, (Rom. xiii. 1,—4. see the notes there) and to be cheerfully willing to do every lawful thing that they require; as also to perform every duty, that is owing to persons of all degrees and stations, yea, good works of every kind, relating to God, ourselves, and others.

1 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

2 Caution them likewise against reviling any one, of whatever rank, nation, or religion he be; against falsely charging any crime upon him; or exposing his character, with an ill design, by divulging even the bad things he may be guilty of; or ever doing it at all, unless some valuable end is to be answered by it: Warn them against a litigious, quarrelsome temper and behaviour, to the disturbance of civil or religious communities: Teach them, on the contrary, to be of an equitable, candid, yielding spirit; and to manifest an humble, mild, and good temper in all their words and actions, towards all sorts of men, even enemies, and ungodly people themselves.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

3 And we surely ought to be ready to go into such an humble and candid disposition towards those that are no worse than we once were, and, if left to ourselves, should still have been: For while we were in a state of nature, under the power of the corruptions that reigned in us, even we ourselves were then destitute of all spiritual knowledge and wisdom relating to our duty and happiness; were disobedient to God, and to his holy, just, and good laws; were wandering (*πλανημένοι*) from him, and from the way of life and peace, being seduced by the treachery of our own hearts, by false teachers and the temptations of Satan, and of this evil world; were perfect slaves to various sinful inclinations and sensual pleasures; yea, were spending our time in a malicious way of wishing and doing ill to those that did not please us, and in envious thoughts at the honour and advantages of those that were above us: And so, upon the whole, we were most detestable creatures, odious in ourselves, and to God and all good men †; and full of bitter enmity one against another, according to our different passions and interests, and most flagrantly so, as we were either *Jews* or *Gentiles*, who reciprocally had an implacable aversion to each other, as such.

4 But

#### N O T E.

† *Hating one another* (*μισήσεις ἀλλήλους*) seems directly to point to the national enmity that was between the Jews and Gentiles; and as there was as much on the Jews part against the Gentiles, as on the Gentiles against the Jews, and rather more, it carries a strong intimation, that the apostle does not, in this and the following verses, speak merely of the wretched vile state of the Gentiles by nature, and their recovery by grace; but of mankind in general, inclusive of the Jews, and of himself and Titus, as well as others: And, u-

pon the closest attention, I cannot find one character in the whole description, that may not be applied in common to them: much less can I think, with some, that the apostle should all along mean only himself, in an argument to enforce upon all believers the duties he had before been recommending to them; and that, without giving the least hint of such a design in the variation of his stile, or in the tenor of his discourse, or in any part of the preceding or following verses.



4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

4 But a holy and happy change was made upon us, who were in those hideous circumstances, when (*ver.*) the transcendent benignity of God, who contrived, ordained, and brought about, our salvation by Jesus Christ, and his astonishing *Philanthropy*, (*φιλανθρωπία*) or special loving-kindness to sinners of mankind, in distinction from the fallen angels, (*αγγέλων*) broke out, and shone forth with illustrious and reviving beams, upon us, in the preaching of the gospel, and in the *rising of the Son of righteousness* himself upon our souls, *with healing in his wings*, (Mal. iv. 2.)

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

5 As we had so deeply plunged ourselves into all that is vile and hateful, It neither was, nor could be, in consideration of any good or holy works which we had performed, that God was induced to show us so high favour, there having been nothing of that kind, but every thing of a contrary strain found in us; but it was merely of his own free, self-moving, undeserved and forfeited, yea, abused and provoked mercy, and according to its own compassionate propensions; that he brought us out of that deplorable condition into a state of salvation, through the cleansing virtue of regenerating grace, which was signified by our baptism with water, (see the note on *Ephes. v. 26.*) and was effected by that renovation in the spirit of our minds, which was wrought in us by the special operation of the Holy Spirit.

6 Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour,

6 Which Holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, God the Father poured out from on high upon us with the greatest riches and abundance, according to his infinite mercy, (*ver. 5.*) and his promise relating to gospel-times, (*Isa. xlv. 3.* see the notes on *Acts ii. 38, 41.*) through the mediation, merit, and exaltation of Jesus Christ, who is our immediate Saviour, as he purchased all salvation for us, and bestows it upon us;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

7 That being brought into a state of pardon and acceptance with God to eternal life, through faith in him, under the Spirit's influence, and so discharged from guilt and condemnation by the free grace of God, on account of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ the Saviour, we might be brought as children into his family, (*John i. 12.*); and, being *children*, might be *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, and be glorified together with him*, (Rom. viii. 17.) according to the solid ground of hope, which God has given us in Christ, and in the promises, and the grace of hope, which he has wrought in us upon that ground, of inheriting eternal life through a Redeemer.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law: for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject:

8 All that I have been saying is a true and faithful word, (ἀληθὲς) which may, and ought to be, firmly believed; and I would have you frequently assert and insist upon these important things in the course of your ministry, relating to the wretched state of man by nature, and the rich mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Saviour, for regeneration, justification, and eternal life, (ὡς) to the end that those, who have believed in God through Christ, according to the gospel-revelation, might be induced, and excited thereby, to use the utmost care and diligence to abound, excel, and lead the way to others, (καλὰ ἔργα ποιεῖσθαι) in all such works, as are honourable to God, and Christ, and to the Christian character. These doctrines, and the good works to which they manifestly tend, are every way excellent in their own nature; and though God cannot be profited by them, they are exceeding useful and beneficial to mankind.

9 But keep yourself clear off, and endeavour to discountenance those senseless, idle, doating questions, that judaizing teachers are so fond of; and those intricate endless genealogies, for making out their own lineage from this and the other particular tribe and family, (see the first note on 1 Tim. i. 4.) which are of no manner of advantage, after the Messiah has come, and put an end to their church-state and polity; as also their litigious controversies, and warm contendings about the sense and obligation of the ceremonial law, which they would introduce into the gospel-dispensation: For all these disputes are entirely useless, as answering no good purpose: Nay, they are (ματαια) foolish and prejudicial, as turning to a very bad account, for sowing discord, corrupting the gospel of Christ, and hindering the practice of real godliness.

10 If any professor of Christianity, or member of a church, entertain and boldly assert such errors, as overthrow the foundation-doctrines of the gospel; and especially if he evidently appear to do it with a heretical heart, to gratify his own pride, and make himself the head of a contrary sect, or out of prejudice against the truths themselves, because they lie in direct opposition to his own lusts; let him be solemnly admonished and warned, a first and second time, of his sin and danger; and if, after this, he shall still obstinately persist in his destructive errors; reject him and all communion with him; avoid his company; caution others against him; and have nothing further to do with such an incorrigible heresiarch, or sectary of his stamp.

11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and smothered, being condemned of himself.

11 For you may be well satisfied, that such a man is utterly turned off from Christ, the foundation, and from all goodness; and that he sins against his own soul if not against his own conscience, and sins against the divine authority, light and truth of the gospel-revelation: His own avowing, and persisting in these pernicious errors, is sufficient, without any further proof, to convict him of them; and so out of his own mouth he is judged, as being self-condemned: And he hereby practically passes judgment against, and condemns himself, as not fit to stand in any relation to, or have any fellowship with, the true church of Christ †.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Ty-chicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

12 I have given you these brief instructions, how to conduct in your present critical situation; and hope to have an opportunity of adding what may be of further use to you, in personal conversation, as soon as I can well spare, and shall send either *Artemas*, or *Tychicus*, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, (Ephes. vi. 21.) to supply your place, and take care of the churches at *Crete*: As soon as either of them arrive, I beg that you would make all convenient speed in coming to me at *Nicopolis* \*, where you will probably meet with

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† The paraphrase hints the common notion of a *beritic*, as one that appears to be so wicked and perverse, as to act against his own conscience in broaching and maintaining fundamental error: But it chiefly goes upon what I take to be the true notion of *self-condemned*, (*αὐτοκατακρίτος*) as signifying one whose own confession is enough to convict him, without any further proof. In this manner we may understand a person to be *self-condemned*, or *condemned of himself*, when evidence of the charge against him rises from his own confession, without any need of further witnesses. Thus *Jab* said, (chap. ix. 20.) "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse;" that is, my own words would condemn me, as a vain proud boaster: And *Ehphaz* said of *Jab*, (chap. xv. 5, 6) "Thy mouth utters thine iniquity, and thou choicest the tongue of the crafty; thine own mouth condemns thee, and not I: yea thine own lips testify against thee." When the slothful servant hid his Lord's talent in a napkin, and went about to excuse it by a dishonourable and unjust charge against his Lord himself, "He said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I will judge thee, thou wicked servant," (Luke xix. 22.); and when our Lord owned himself to be "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, the high priest rent his clothes,

and said, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death," (Mark xiv. 62, 63, 64.) It appears from all these instances, that by a person's own confession, whether of real or supposed crimes, he is looked upon as *self-condemned*. And in "the account that men shall give of every idle word in the day of judgment," Christ says, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Mat. xii. 36, 37.)

\* This *Nicopolis* is most probably judged, by bishop *Pearson*, and others, to be, not, as the postscript of this epistle says, in *Macedonia*, but a town of that name upon the sea-coast of Epirus, a province of Greece, on the west towards Italy. (See *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, part 2. p. 69) But, wherever it was, it is plain that this epistle was not written from thence, as the postscript further makes it; for, had the apostle been then at *Nicopolis*, it would have been most proper for him to have said, I have determined to winter *here*, and not there. (xxx) This also shows that he was then at liberty; and gives ground to think, that this epistle was wrote between his first and second imprisonment at Rome: And his desiring Titus to come to him at *Nicopolis*, and proposing to send *Artemas*, or *Tychicus* to supply

with me : For I purpose, God willing, to go thither in a little time, and take up my winter-quarters there.

13 And when you set out for that place, take care to bring *Zenas* the lawyer, and the zealous, laborious, and eloquent *Apollos*, (*Acts* xviii. 24, 25.) along with you ; and to provide every thing that may be needful to bear their expences, and accommodate them in their journey, that nothing proper and convenient for them in the way may be deficient, or lacking to them.

14 And leave it as a charge with all our Christian friends and brethren at *Crete*, and wherever you meet with them, that they be prompt and willing to excel in such good works of benevolence, and hospitality by entertaining religious strangers, and especially such gospel-preachers as I have been but now recommending to you, (*ver.* 12, 13.) and indeed in every good work that is laudable and useful for the necessary purposes of glorifying God, and *doing good to all men, and especially to them of the household of faith*, (*Gal.* vi. 10.) that they may *neither be unprofitable to them, nor barren or unfruitful themselves, in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* (*2 Pet.* i. 8.)

15 All the Christian brethren, who are at present here, join with me in sending their affectionate salutations in the Lord, particularly to yourself : And as I have wrote this letter for the use and benefit of the churches in *Crete*, as well as for your own direction in the discharge of your office toward them, I desire that the like kind salutations may be presented to all those of them, that sincerely love us, with a Christian love, for the sake of that faith, which we embrace and preach, profess and propagate, which they themselves also have received, and which works by love. May the free favour of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, together with all its manifestations and blessed fruits, abound towards all and every one of you, (*see 2 Cor.* xiii. 14.) : This I heartily wish and pray may

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ply his place at *Crete*, carries a strong intimation, that Titus was not, as some would have it, and the postscript avers, the first bishop of the church of the Cretians ; but that he was an evangelist, who, according to the nature of that office, had no fixed residence ; but travelled about, as occasions required, from place to place, to assist the apostles in their work, and come to them, or go on their messages, wherever they might find them. We have no certain account of this *Artemas*, nor of *Zenas* the lawyer, men-

tioned in the next verse, beyond what is here said of them ; but Titus, no doubt, well knew them, at least by name, to be persons of worthy character ; and *Zenas* being joined with *Apollos*, (*ver.* 13.) who was a Jew, is thought by some to have been an interpreter of the Jewish law ; but *Grotius* supposes, that he might be a Roman lawyer, as not doubting but that many such became ministers of Christ ; because they saw that all just and righteous precepts were eminently contained in his religion.

may be, and humbly hope and trust will be, your happy case, in token of which I sincerely and affectionately add, *Amen.*

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How friendly is the Christian religion to civil government, and to an universal benevolence toward persons of every rank and character ! And what sweet and powerful arguments does it afford to every work of piety toward God, of self-government, and of tenderness to *the characters*, together with meekness and gentleness toward *the persons* of all mankind, whether friends or foes ! May we often think how wretchedly vile we were, in our natural state, to make us humble in our own eyes, and favourable in our dispositions towards others that are in like deplorable circumstances still ! We ourselves were foolish, disobedient, wanderers from God and goodness, slaves to sensual passions and appetites, malicious, envious, odious, and bitter enemies to the happiness of one or other of our fellow-creatures. But O the riches and freeness of divine mercy and grace, which, notwithstanding all this unworthiness and sinfulness, has made a blessed change in our temper and condition, by means of the gospel, when it came to us in the light and energy of the spirit ! We are hereby brought into a state of grace, regenerated, justified, and made heirs of eternal life, and have the most solid grounds for a comfortable and assured hope of a complete enjoyment of it. And O with what affecting demonstration does it appear, that this could never be for the sake of any good thing done by or found in such abominable sinners as we were ; but is all entirely owing to the mere mercy and grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and is made effectual to us by the special operation of his Spirit ! that the glory of it all may be ascribed to the Sacred Three, according to their joint agency, and concernment in bringing about our salvation ! And how should these true and important sayings of God, be often inculcated and impressed upon the minds and hearts of believers, for exciting and engaging their diligent care to excel in all works of piety, righteousness, and charity, that are good and lovely in themselves, and useful to mankind ! How should they shun all trifling, contentions and unprofitable disputes about religion ! And with what seriousness should obstinate heretics be warned of their dangerous errors, by orderly admonitions ! But, in case of contumacy, with what detestation should they be rejected, as persons that would overthrow the foundation of the Christian faith, and that evidently labour at this, and persist in it, as their own self-condemning profession sufficiently testifies, whether it be against the dictates of their own consciences or not ! But how sincerely affectionate should sound believers be one to another, as partakers of the same common faith ; and how ready to assist each other in all their wants, and to give, and receive mutual salutations in the Lord ! May the love and grace of God the Father, Son, and Spirit, be with all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth ! *Amen.*

A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E  
Epistle of the Apostle P A U L  
T O  
P H I L E M O N.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

The Preface to the EPISTLE to PHILEMON.

**T**HIS epistle to *Philemon*, though very short, and wrote (as some think about the year sixty, or, as others say, sixty-three,) on a private occasion, is very nervous, entertaining, and instructive. 'Tis the most perfect pattern of familiar letter-writing, every way worthy of the great apostle, and of our esteem and imitation: It gives us a most remarkable instance of the free and sovereign grace of God to as abandoned a wretch as can well be imagined; and of Providence's over-ruling, even his wickedness to subserve the design of grace towards him: And it contains the liveliest sentiments of flowing tenderness, generosity and humanity, and the finest art of persuasive rhetoric and genteel address, together with the native beauty of Christian compassion, condescension, charity, and love. The characters under which the apostle speaks of himself, and of *Philemon* and *Onesimus*, with the representations he makes of their respective circumstances, and the judicious structure of the whole epistle, with every thought, and indeed every word, from first to last, in its proper place, are calculated with almost inimitable dexterity, and yet with a natural, unaffected, easy turn, and godly sincerity, to answer its main point in view.

*Philemon*, to whom this letter was wrote, appears in the light of an eminent Christian, though, perhaps, naturally of a stiff temper, and too apt to resent offences: He, probably, was a person of considerable worldly substance, and converted by the apostle's instrumentality, *ver.* 1,—4. and 7,—19.; and he seems to have been a *Colossian*; for *Onesimus* is said to be *one of them*, Col. iv. 9.; and *Archippus*, who is

(saluted

saluted here, (*ver.* 2.) is directed to take heed to his ministry there, *Col.* iv. 17.

*Onesimus*, on whose behalf the apostle wrote, was *Philemon's* slave, and had turned a thief and a runaway, who, in his rambles, came to *Rome*, at the time of the apostle *Paul's* first confinement there, as appears from the hope he expresses of his coming to *Colosse*, *ver.* 22. answerable to like expressions of it in that situation, *Phil.* i. 25. and ii. 24.; whereas, in his second imprisonment, he had no doubt but that the time of his departure was then at hand, *2 Tim.* iv. 6.; but, in his first imprisonment, he was allowed to preach to company that came to him in his own hired house, where he dwelt as a prisoner at large, *Acts* xxviii. 30, 31. (See the note there.) And *Onesimus*, being brought by the providence of God under these ministrations, the Holy Spirit set the word home upon his heart to make it effectual for his conversion, which laid the foundation of a most cordial love between the apostle and him; in so much that *Paul* would have been glad to have him for his attendant, and *Onesimus* would willingly have waited upon him, in his confinement, *ver.* 13. But as the Christian religion makes no alteration in civil rights, and the apostle had learnt that *Onesimus* was *Philemon's* property by the laws of the country, he would not detain him; but sending him back to his master, to whom he was willing to go, wrote this letter to dispose *Philemon* to forgive former injuries, and to receive him into his family and favour again.

*After a very moving and endearing salutation, 1,—3, and most affectionate expressions of joy and praise, on account of Philemon's steady faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, and particularly to the poor among them, 4,—7, The apostle, with a most obliging address, opens the compassionate design of his letter, and throws together a variety of surprising, well adjusted, and moving topics, to recommend Onesimus to Philemon's kind regards, and engage him to accept of the return of his penitent fugitive, who would now make him a rich amends for all the misdemeanours, he had formerly been guilty of; and for whom the apostle promises to make up any loss that Philemon had sustained by him, 8,—22; And then concludes, according to his custom, with salutations, and a benediction, 23,—25.*

## TEXT.

**P**AUL, a prisoner of Jesus

## PARAPHRASE.

**P**AUL, † who is now suffering as a prisoner at *Rome*, on account of his faithful testimony to Jesus Christ, in

## NOTE.

† Since the apostle intended to proceed, not on the foot of authority, but of “friendship and love,” in his address to *Philemon*, (*ver.* 8, 9.) his prefacing the epistle with “Paul, the prisoner of the Lord,” was more suitable, decent, and melting, as well as condescending, and more likely to work upon a

compassionate generous soul, and so to carry his point, than if he had begun with, “Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ,” (which *Philemon* will know him to be) as he usually did other epistles, where any concerned in them either denied, or disputed his authority. (See the note on *Gal.* i. 1.)

Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer;

2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house :

3 Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,

5 Hearing of thy love and faith,

in preaching the gospel of salvation alone through faith in him ; and the excellent *Timothy*, who, as a Christian and minister, is a brother in the household of faith, and in the work of the Lord, heartily join (see the note 1 Cor. i. 1.) in sending this epistle to *Philemon*, our dearly beloved brother in Christ, (ver. 7.) and fellow-servant for promoting his cause and interest, according to the advantageous station in which God has placed him \* ; as also to the amiable *Apphia*, whom we love in the truth, (2 John ver. 1.) and to the *Colossian* minister, *Archippus*, who, having listed under the banner of the Captain of salvation, wars a good warfare, as a fellow-soldier with us, for the advancement of his kingdom and glory ; and to the whole of your religious family, dear *Philemon*, which for the beauty of its discipline and order, social worship, harmony and holy conversation, is a lively image of a regular church of Christ.

3 We most affectionately unite in our earnest wishes and prayers, that the riches of divine grace in their utmost extent, manifestations, fruits and effects, and all manner of prosperity for this world and a better, may be multiplied to all, and every one of you, (ver. 7.) by the free gift of God our heavenly Father, as the original fountain ; and by the mediation, merit and communication of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the grand appointed medium of conveyance, and the procurer and dispenser of all, in the administration of his office, as mediator.

4, 5 As to yourself in particular, my compassionate good friend, *Philemon*, I am full of thanksgiving and praise, on your behalf, to my covenant God and Father, bearing you on my heart, and mentioning you before him with great delight in my daily addresses at the throne of grace, on account of what I have had the pleasure

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\* As to the persons saluted in these two verses, *Philemon's* being called a *fellow-labourer* may probably intimate, that he was engaged in the work of the ministry, but does not certainly prove it ; because any that were assistant to the apostles, tho' but in private stations, for helping forward the work of the Lord, were sometimes spoken of under that character, as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* were, Rom. xvi. 3. (see the paraphrase there,) and they that hospitably received the servants of Christ, are called *fellow-labourers* (συνεργοί) to the truth. 3 John, ver. 8.—*Apphia* is supposed by some of the ancients to have been *Philemon's* wife ; the epithet *beloved* (αγαπητή) is feminine, but the *Alex-*

*andrian*, *Claremont*, and other copies add *sister*. (Vid. Mill in Loc.)—*Archippus* was a minister of the church at Colosse, (see the paraphrase on Col. iv. 17.) and Dr Lightfoot inclined to think, that he was *Philemon's* son, or at least, a sojourner in his house. (Vol. I. p. 327 of his works.)—The church in *Philemon's* house seems to take in the whole of his Christian family. (See the note on Rom. xvi. 5.) And so the apostle saluted all that were dear to him and dwelt with him, and spoke honourably and affectionately of them to ingratiate himself with them, and engage their interest with *Philemon* in favour of *Onesimus*.



faith, which thou  
hast toward the  
Lord Jesus, and  
toward all saints;

4 That the communication of thy  
faith may become effectual, by  
the acknowledging of every good  
thing which is in  
you, in Christ Je-  
sus.

5 For we have  
great joy and con-  
solation in thy  
love, because the  
bowels of the  
saints are refresh-  
ed by thee, bro-  
ther.

6 Wherefore,  
though I might be  
much hold in  
Christ, to enjoin  
thee that which  
is convenient :

9 Yet for love's  
sake

pleasure of hearing, upon good intelligence, of the continued steadfastness, lively exercise and increase, and honourable profession of your faith, which you hold fast in a firm dependence on the person and offices, righteousness, grace and government of Jesus, who is Lord of all †; and of your growing and exemplary love to all the holy professors of his name, because they visibly bear his image, belong to him, and are beloved of him.

6 And, in reflection on this, my earnest request to God for you is, that your sharing in the common faith may be effectual to engage you unto all further acts of generosity; and that your readiness to communicate, as the fruit of your faith, may be an effectual means of inducing all that hear of it, and especially that receive the benefit, to make the most grateful acknowledgments of all those kind and holy dispositions that are wrought and operate in you and your benevolent family (*ὁ οὖν οὗτος Χριστός ἐστις*) toward Jesus Christ, and his poor members and servants, for his sake, by virtue derived from him, and to his honour and glory, and the furtherance of his gospel.

7 For 'tis an exceeding great joy and consolation to me in my bonds, as it also is to Timothy, (ver. 1.) to think of the generous expressions of your sincere love; because I am informed, that the hungry appetites and empty stomachs of the poor, whether private Christians, or holy ministers, are abundantly relieved and satisfied, to the comforting of their hearts, by your charitable donations, my dear brother.

8 Encouraged therefore by your pious and compassionate temper, tho', were I to insist on my apostolic authority, which I have received from Christ, and on your obligations to me his servant, (ver. 19.) I might, with the high tone of a father, take the freedom of commanding you to do what is proper, fit and right in the case I am going to recommend to you.

9 Yet I rather choose to wave *that* \*, and, putting myself

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† Faith manifestly refers to the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints, according to the natural order in which these expressions are set, Col. i. 4.; and therefore here, as well as in several other places, there must be allowed a transposition of words; and so the regular position of them in this sentence is thus, "Hearing of thy faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and love towards all the saints." Our translators, (says Mr Blackwall in his sacred classics, Vol. I. pag. 87.) improperly retained the transposition, which will not be endured in English,

but such construction is allowable in Greek, and used by the noblest authors.

\* In what a handsome manner does the apostle just hint, and immediately drop, the consideration of his authority to command, and proceed, in the most tender and moving strain, upon the foot of love and friendship, to beseech Philemon to hearken to him, as to "his friend, his aged friend, and prisoner, "in the Lord," to work upon the veneration, compassion, and kind regards of one, whose generous soul he had just before warmed with the most pleasing sentiments that arise from

take I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

myself upon a level with you, as your brother in Christ, (*ver. 7.*) to intreat it of you, as such, by all the love, that the Lord himself, and I bear to you, and that you bear to him and his poor, and particularly to me his suffering servant; and I cannot doubt, but that your sense of the love of Christ to you, and your love to him and his members, and your compassionate and tenderly sympathizing regards to me, will move you to do what in you lyes to comfort me, when you consider that I am not only *Paul*, your fast friend and brother, but your aged friend of ripe judgment, and grown old in the service of our common Lord; and am now, under the infirmities and decays of advanced years, suffering all the hardships of a prison, through the malice of my enemies, for the sake of Jesus Christ and his gospel, which I preach, and you have received.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

10 What I, in all love, would particularly request of you, and is the present occasion of my writing, relates to your shewing kindness to one, who, by a wonderful change wrought upon him, is become as dear to me, as though in a literal sense he were a son that had proceeded from my own bowels, (*ver. 12.*): To speak plainly, if it may be without offence, I mean *Onesimus*, your poor slave, to whom, whatsoever he was before, I am become a spiritual father, as having been instrumental, through the grace of Christ, in regenerating him by means of the word, which I have been permitted to preach in my confinement.

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

11 In this manner have I begotten him to Christ, who, as I perceive by his own penitent confession with brokenness of heart, was formerly a worthless and injurious servant to you; but now having passed through the new birth, is become, according to the signification of his name, a *very useful* one, and will approve himself to be diligent and faithful to the advantage of any that may employ him, as I have found him to be to myself since his conversion. He would certainly make a very good servant now to you, were you to take him again into your house and favour; and I should reckon myself very happy in his service, were he to remain with me.

12 Upon

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from doing good, by reciting, with joy and praise, the great love and liberality he had shewn to all the saints! *ver. 4, — 7.* And with what endearment, in the next verse, does he call Onesimus his *son*, before he so much as mentioned his name; and as soon as he had mentioned it, lest Philemon's resentment should rise too high at the very hearing it, with what fine address does he only

just touch upon his former faults, and instantly pass on to the happy change that was made upon him, to carry Philemon's thoughts off from what had been bad, to what now was good in him; and so dispose him to attend to the apostle's request, and to all the motives he was going to advance to enforce it, in Onesimus's favour!

11 Whom I have sent again : thou therefore receive him that is mine own bowels.

12 Upon the proof I have had of him, and knowing his willingness to return and submit himself, and make all humble acknowledgments of his former crimes, and do his duty for time to come, I have sent him back again to you, with this recommendatory letter; I therefore earnestly beseech you, (*ver. 10.*) to receive him into your favour and family, for my sake, as well as for your own advantage, with the same readiness and affection, as you would any child of mine, tenderly beloved by me, as the fruit of my own body, and so a part of myself, who shall rejoice, or be grieved at heart, according to your good, or severe treatment of him.

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

13 For my own part, I would have gladly kept him with me, to perform all the good offices toward me, which I am satisfied, were you here, you would be willing to do for me yourself; or which, in your absence, you would wish any servant of yours should do in your stead, while I am loaded and confined with the chains, that, for preaching the gospel, are laid upon me, as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. (*ver. 9.*)

14 But without thy command would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

14 But how much soever I should have chosen, and been pleased with this, I consider him as your property, who have a legal right to him, and to all his best service; and therefore would not take one step this way, without your approbation and free consent, that the benefit I should receive from your servant, and consequently from yourself, might not be extorted from you, as what you could not decently refuse; but that it might be left entirely to your own choice, to do in it just as you think best; and that whatever favour you may shew him and me, it might not proceed from any force upon your inclinations; but merely from your own good-will and pleasure.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him for ever;

15 For, possibly, the design of Providence, in permitting his leaving you, and your losing his service for a little time, as it were but for an hour, (*ὑπο ὥραν*) was, not only that he might be brought under those means of grace which God intended to make effectual for his conversion, who, under all the excellent opportunities he had in your eminent religious family, grew worse and worse; but also that he might be made a so much better servant, and he so ingratiated thereby to you, as might give you the greater pleasure and advantage in receiving him again, to continue with you all the days of his life, \* like those servants under the law, who said,

I love

N O T E.

\* For ever here, in allusion, as some suppose, to Exod. xxi. 6. could be at most only

to the end of the servant's life; nor can it be carried any further, if we suppose, with others

*I love my master, and will not go out free, (Ex. xvi. 5) and even to dwell with you in heaven to all eternity.*

15 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

16 You may entertain him now, not merely as a common servant or slave; but as one that is worthy of still higher respect, even as a brother in the Lord, greatly beloved of him, and of all his Christian acquaintances; and especially of me, who have been the instrument of this happy and holy change upon him, and have had the best opportunities of observing his honourable behaviour in consequence of it; but how much more still ought he now to be affectionately esteemed and valued by you, as your property, relating to the concerns of the body, and as henceforth your most loving and dutiful servant; yea, as your brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and equal sharer, as such, with you, in all the privileges and blessings of Christ's family and kingdom here, and for ever hereafter.

17 If thou regard me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

17 If therefore, upon the whole, you have any value and respect for me, and count me your friend, brother, fellow-labourer, and joint-heir of grace and glory, and one that has been blessed of God to the good of your own soul; and would make me a partaker of that generous goodness which you have been so ready to show to others, (*ver. 7.*) I beseech you not to deny my request; but receive him with the same cheerfulness and kindness as you would my own person, who so tenderly interest myself in his case, and shall reckon your favour to him as shewn to myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweeth thee ought, put that on mine account.

18 If (as there is great reason to fear) you have sustained loss or damage, by his purloinings or embezzlements, be it to a greater or lesser degree, or if he is any way in debt to you, let not that hinder your free reception of him. Though he be not able to make any restitution, place all that to my account\*; so as, in a way of legal estimation, to impute it to me, and make me answerable for it.

19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will

19 I *Paul*, your faithful friend, engage to you, as I now do, under my own hand-writing, that (God willing) I will certainly clear off this score, and make you full

#### N O T E.

others, that the apostle referred to *heathen-servants*, that were bought by the *Israelites* to be their bond-men and bond-maids for ever, *Lev. xlv. 44, 46.*: But the argument is still more touching, on supposition that the apostle had a further eye to their eternally dwelling together in heaven.

\* Put that on mine account, (*ταυτο μου λο-*

*γισται*) or impute it to me, expresses, and gives us a just notion of proper *imputation*, in a way of legal account; and this with a similar verb of like signification (*λογιζομαι*) is rendered *impute*, with regard to sin and righteousness, *Rom. iv. 6, 8, 11. and v. 13.* Here then is a plain instance of the imputation of that to another, which was not his own before.

I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But wist thou that I shall be given unto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus;

full satisfaction to the utmost farthing: This I will cheerfully do, notwithstanding my straiten'd circumstances, and your affluence; though I might insist upon it, but shall not, that, in balancing accounts, you owe me a great deal more than he can have wrong'd you of; even, in a way of instrumentality, the salvation of your own soul, as I was the means of bringing you to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him for eternal life.

20 Yea, I earnestly beseech you, as a brother in sacred relation to me, as well as to *Onesimus*, to receive him cordially for my sake, as well as his own, not to say for yours also, and most of all for the Lord Jesus's sake, that I may rejoice in reflection upon the efficacy of his grace to engage your love and forgiveness to this poor slave, as one that you and I esteem, under the consideration of him as united to Christ by faith; let my heart be comforted now, in my bonds, with the great pleasure I shall feel in your dealing kindly with him, whom I am so touchingly concerned for, on the Lord Christ's account, in whose name I beg this favour of you.

21 The great confidence I have had in your willingness to hearken to me, and yield obedience to our Lord's commands, with respect to forgiving injuries, and receiving a disciple in the name of a disciple, (*Mat. x. 42.* and *Luke vi. 37.*) encouraged me to write to you on behalf of this poor returning fugitive; and I have a pleasing satisfaction in my own mind, that you will be ready to show him, even more favour than I have requested for him; and so I leave that matter for the present.

22 But I would further add my desire, that you would provide some proper place for me to lodge at when I come to *Colosse*, and may have an opportunity of making a personal acknowledgment of your kindness to *Onesimus*, and me therein, and of paying what he owes you: For I trust in the Lord, that by means of, and in answer to your and other Christians prayers, (*Phil. i. 19.*) I shall for this time be set at liberty from my bonds, as one graciously given of God to you for your further spiritual profit, and shall have the pleasure of making you a visit to our mutual satisfaction.

23 *Epaphras*, one of your ministers, a dear fellow-servant, who is fervent in prayer, and has a great zeal for the church of *Colosse*, (*Col. i. 7.* and *iv. 12, 13.*) and is now my fellow-sufferer in prison for the cause of Christ, sends his most affectionate respects to you, (see the note on *Phil. ii. 25.*)

24 Marcos, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

24 And so does *John Mark*, for whom I have the greatest friendship, notwithstanding some former displeasure I conceived at his having gone from me, (Acts xv. 37, 38.) as also *Aristarchus* the Macedonian, who was exposed to the utmost danger, for my sake, at *Ephesus*, (Acts xix. 29.) and *Demas* †; and *Luke* the beloved physician, (Col. iv. 14.) who are my fellow labourers in the work of the Lord.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

25 May the free love and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all its suitable and abounding manifestations, fruits, and effects, be with the soul of every one of you, (*ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΚΩΣ ΟΙΚΟΥ*) to guide, comfort, strengthen, and sanctify you, yet more and more, and to supply all your wants, till ye arrive at his heavenly kingdom. In testimony of my ardent desire and hope of this all-comprehensive blessing for you, I say *Amen*.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a wonderful change does sovereign grace make upon sinners, as profligate, base, and abandoned as *Onesimus* had been, who of a perfidious thief, unprofitable lazy slave, and vagrant and runagate from his master, became a sober, diligent, useful, and faithful servant! O how easily can God over-rule even the wickedness of those for good, to whom he has a design of showing mercy! With what tender affection do the instruments of their conversion think and speak of them, as though they were the children of their own bowels! How becoming is it for those, that are their masters after the flesh, and have been injured by them, to forgive and love such penitents, as more than bare servants, even as brethren in the Lord! How happy may they think themselves in the future better services, that are to be charitably expected from them! And how worthy of imitation is the great apostle's wisdom, condescension, and engaging way of arguing, to recommend returning penitents to the favour and compassion of those that had been justly offended at them for past abuses! They are to be intreated for love's sake, with an address to their benevolent temper, and confidence in their friendship; and with the most mollifying, instead of aggravating representations of the crimes that have been committed, rather than to be over-aw'd with authority; or deprived of their civil property, without their own free consent: They are to be reminded of the happy turn that is given to the formerly iniquitous disposition of him that is recommended to their favour; of the advantage that will accrue to themselves by complying with a request on his behalf; and of the kindness that will be therein shown, not to say the obligation they are under, to the interceding friend, who will esteem it as done to himself, will readily undertake to repay any damages that have been suffered by purloinings, or otherwise, and will rejoice in the Lord, on account of his disposing them to manifest a forgiving spirit for his sake. With what face could any, that harden themselves against such melting importunity, ever think of seeing the friend that uses it with so much earnest concern for its success; especially if he be one, to whom they, in some sense, owe their own happiness for this world, or a better? And O how amiable is the person whose faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints are displayed, in forgiving the offences of brethren, and bountifully refreshing the bowels of the poor, and in contributing, all that in him lies, to the comfort of the aged, persecuted,

#### N O T E.

† This is that Demas, who afterwards, in the apostle's second imprisonment at Rome, forsook him in his troubles, "having

"loved this present world," 2 Tim. iv. 10. (See the note there.)

persecuted, afflicted servants of the Lord; and whose religious family appears with all the beauty and order of a church of Christ! Such exemplary and useful professors of the gospel ought to be remembered, with thankfulness to God in prayer; and there cannot but be an exceeding pleasure in saluting them after a godly sort, and having a holy partnership and communion with them. Who would not wish, that every blessing of grace and peace may be multiplied to them, from the Father of mercies, through the mediation of his Son! May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with their spirits; and all that love him say Amen.

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## A PRACTICAL

## E X P O S I T I O N

## O F T H E

## E P I S T L E T O T H E

## H E B R E W S.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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## The Preface to the EPISTLE to the HEBREWS.

**T**HIS epistle to the *Hebrews* is most generally supposed, and that with the greatest probability, to have been written by the apostle Paul before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, while he was a prisoner at *Rome* about the year of our Lord *sixty-three*; though on account of Jewish prejudices against him, as the apostle of the *Gentiles*, and a strenuous assertor of justification alone through faith in Christ without the deeds of the law, it may be looked upon as a point of great prudence in him, that he concealed his name, and that instead of laying the weight of his doctrine, as he usually did in other epistles, upon his apostolic authority, he began this, and all along carried on his design in it, upon the foot of the authority of the *Old Testament-scriptures*, which these *Hebrews* universally owned to be of divine inspiration: and, as the *postscript* avers, it seems to have been sent by *Timothy*. (See *chap. xiii. 22, 23*.)

The most considerable evidences of the apostle Paul's being the author of it are, his sublime sentiments, and close, nervous and pathetic way of reasoning, and applying things that relate to the person and offices

offices of Christ, and to the nature, use, and design, together with the abolishment, of the *Mosaic* institutions, wherein this writer shews the most exact and extensive acquaintance with the laws of the *Jewish* church, which the apostle *Paul* had been most accurately led into by *Gamaliel's* instructions, under whom he profited in the *Jews* religion above many of his equals, (*Gal. i. 14.*) and in this epistle he speaks of his bonds, and of *Timothy* as his companion, and closes it with salutations from the Christians of *Italy*, and with his usual benediction, *Grace be with you all*, which he mentions as the token in all his epistles, 2 *Thess. iii. 17, 18.* And some suppose the apostle *Peter* refers to this very epistle, when writing to the *Hebrews* he takes notice of what his beloved brother *Paul* had wrote to them. 2 *Pet. iii. 15, 16.* (See the note there.) Upon the whole, this epistle was owned to be the apostle *Paul's* by the generality of the primitive writers and councils of the first four centuries; and for many ages was universally received, as such, by the churches, as has been observed by various learned men. (See *Dr Owen's* third exercitation, and *Dr Whitby's* and *Mr Peirce's* preface to this epistle.) I shall therefore make no scruple, in the course of the exposition, to speak of the apostle *Paul* as its author.

However, it seems that the persons to whom it was most immediately sent knew who was the author of it, since he says to them, *chap. xiii. 18, 19. Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly; But I beseech you the rather to do this, that we may be restored to you the sooner.* And the divine authority of this epistle (which has been readily allowed by some, that have not ascribed it to the apostle *Paul*) has no dependence on our certainly knowing the name of the writer, any more than the authority of several books of the *Old Testament* does upon our knowing who were the penmen of them.

The *Jews*, to whom this epistle was sent, seem to have been the whole body of them that had made a profession of Christ; but it was probably sent directly and immediately to those of *Judea* and *Jerusalem*, to be communicated from them to their brethren that were dispersed through various countries: And as many of them were too much attached to the *Mosaic* law, and others were in great danger of apostatizing from Christ and the gospel, through the subtilty of false teachers, and through the violent persecutions that their infidel-brethren stirred up against them; so the apostle accommodates the different parts of his epistle to their respective circumstances, and even to the conversion of such unbelievers among them, as preferred the *legal* to the *gospel*-dispensation. Accordingly his principal design is to set forth the excellency of the gospel above the law, in such a way as might direct and establish the faith of true believers in it, without any mixture of the *Mosaic* observances, and encourage them to adhere faithfully and perseveringly to it under all the difficulties and trials that attended their profession of it; as might also recommend it to the acceptance of *Jewish* unbelievers; and might awaken and convince such of their danger, as should reject, or apostatize from it.



In pursuit of this great and complicated design, he sets out with a lofty account of the dignity of *Christ's person*, who is the divine author and subject of the gospel, and superior to all the *prophets*, and even to the most exalted *angels*, by whose ministration the law was delivered at mount *Sinai*, together with the distinguishing regard which he had shewn to the *human*, more than to the *angelic* nature, *chap. i.*  
*ii.* Hereupon he particularly represents Christ to be superior in *office*, as a *prophet*, to *Moses*; and, as a *priest*, to *Abraham* the father of the faithful, and to *Aaron* the high-priest of *Israel*, together with the efficacy and eternity of his priesthood, which was after the order of *Melchizedek*, who was a *king*, as well as a *priest*, *chap. iii.—vii.* Having thus established the transcendent dignity of *Christ's person* and *offices*, and *that* particularly in opposition to the defects of the *Levitical priesthood*, he goes on to the excellency of his *offering*, beyond those that were made under the law; and of the *new covenant*, which is established upon better promises than that of mount *Sinai*, *chap. viii.* From thence he proceeds to shew the great benefit of *gospel-ordinances*, above those of the *Mosaic* institution; and of the *sacrifice* of Christ, by which these and the New Testament-church are purified beyond what could be obtained by those sacrifices, by which the first tabernacle, and its various appendages of worship were dedicated to God, as prefigurative of these, *chap. ix.* He then goes on to the *perfection* of Christ's *sacrifice* to make atonement for sin, of which all the sacrifices under the law were only shadows and figures, utterly insufficient to take away sin, *chap. x.* Hereupon he gives a noble view of the excellency and power of *faith* in the patriarchs and holy men of old, to animate the believing *Hebrews* to perseverance in the faith of the gospel, *chap. xi.* And adding to this cloud of witnesses the example of a suffering Saviour, and the consideration of the much greater excellence and duration of the *Christian*, than the *legal-dispensation*. He exhorts professing believers to *persist in the faith and holiness of the gospel*, and to take heed of *apostacy*, notwithstanding all the cruel persecutions and formidable dangers they were exposed to for their holy profession; and concludes with further exhortations to various duties, with desiring their prayers, and offering up his own for them, and with salutations and his usual benediction, *chap. xii. xiii.*—But in several parts of the epistle he gives himself a great liberty of enlarging upon preceding topics, and often intermingles solemn caution, sweet encouragements, and earnest exhortations, to patience, constancy, and perseverance, suitable to the different characters of those *Jews* into whose hands this Epistle might be supposed to come.

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle, to shew the excellency of the gospel of Christ above the law, and to encourage an adherence to it, introduces his great design with an account of the different manner and seasons in which, and of the persons by whom, the revelations of them respectively were made; and describes the transcendent dignity of the Son of God in his divine person, and in his creating and mediatorial work, whereby he excels all that went before him, 1,—3. And in his superiority to all the holy angels, which is proved by a comparison between him and them in various particulars, in which he has a glorious pre-eminence above them, 4,—14.*

## TEXT.

GOD, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

## PARAPHRASE.

MY great design in writing this Epistle to the Jewish brethren, is to give them a just view of the great difference there is between the *Mosaic law* and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and of the vast preference of this dispensation to *that*; and thereby to engage them to embrace and adhere to the *latter*, as what is intended to perfect and supersede the *former*: In order hereunto, let us first of all consider that, though they were both of divine original; yet God the Father, who anciently declared his mind and will to our pious ancestors, did it not fully, nor all at once, but (*πρὸς μέρος*) by degrees, with increasing light, in several parcels, one time after another, before the days of *Moses*; and then by him, and all along afterwards by other inspired prophets under the *Jewish* dispensation, until the spirit of prophecy ceased in the church of *Israel*; and who in divers ways communicated his word to them, as in dreams, visions, dark figures, and immediate impulses, and the like, in such a gradual manner, as left room for an expectation of still further discoveries of his mind and will in the *Messiah's* days, who, as the *Samaritans*, and the *Jews* themselves believed, would give the fullest and clearest revelation that ever should be made in this world to the consummation of all things. (See *John* iv. 25.)

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

2 God, I say, at the close of the *Jewish* state, and under the last dispensation of his grace, which was frequently foretold as *the latter days* and the *last times*, has now completely made known the whole system or scheme of his councils in the gospel to us, their descendants by a much more glorious messenger, even by his eternal, only-begotten and incarnate Son, (*John* i. 18.) who, as he, being by nature God, has an original and essential right to inherit all things; so by special constitution,

constitution, agreeable to the personal union of the divine and human natures in him, God the Father ordained, and settled him in his incarnate state and office-character, as God-man Mediator, to be his *first-born*, *higher than the kings of the earth*, (Pl. lxxxix. 27.) the Lord, proprietor and possessor, ruler and disposer of all persons and things, *and head over all things to the church*, (Ephes. i. 22.); insomuch that we cannot inherit any blessing, but under him: And of this he cannot but be infinitely worthy, as the Creator of all, by whom, not as an instrument or under-agent, but as a divine person, who, exerting his own power in a proper order, together with the Father, made the upper and lower worlds, and all things whatsoever, from the highest to the lowest ranks of creatures that are in them; So that *without him was not any thing made that was made*. (See the notes on ver. 10. and John i. 3. and Col. i. 16.)

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

3 All his Father shines in him, who is originally, as a divine person, the illustrious splendor of the glory, and most exact character of the person of his Father, as a Son of the same nature, and essential properties with him †; and who manifestatively, as the Son of God incarnate, exhibits such an accurate, substantial, and visible representation of the Father in his infinite wisdom, power, and grace, holiness, and every other perfection, that, *he, who has seen the Son, has seen the Father also*: (John xiv. 9.) And as this glorious Son of God created; so he supports, maintains, and governs all ranks, orders, and individuals of his works by his own almighty efficacious operation, which he exerts with as much ease as by speaking a word, by which he commands, and they stand fast, (Ps. xxxiii. 9.); and so *by him*

#### N O T E.

† As no one similitude taken from creatures is sufficient to illustrate, both the essential union, and personal distinction, of the Father and Son; so, as I humbly conceive, the Son's being "the brightness of the glory" (*αυρασμα της δόξης*) of the Father, relates to his essential and inseparable union with the Father, as "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells" substantially in him. (See the note on Col. ii. 9.) And this may be called the "brightness of the Father's glory," in allusion to the resplendent brightness of a luminous body, and particularly the sun, which is indeed nothing different from the nature of the sun-itself; and his being "the express image or character" (*χαρακτης*) of his person or substance" (*υποστασις*) relates to his personal distinction from the Father, in which the Son is per-

fectly like him, and makes a complete representation of him, in allusion to the exact and undefective likeness of a die and its coin, or of a seal and its impression upon wax, which exactly answers line to line. These representations cannot indeed fully express things as they are in the Divine Being; but they are the best that our narrow minds are capable of to serve the several purposes for which they are used; And the apostle's having first spoke in such strong and magnificent terms of the Son's being "the brightness of the Father's glory," was sufficient to guard against an imagination of a difference in nature between them, when immediately afterwards he calls him the express image or character of the Father's person, (See also Dr. Owen on the place.)

him all things consist, (Col. i. 17.) even by his providential influence, in whom, as well as in God the Father, *we live, and move, and have our being*, (Acts xvii. 28.) † And this Son of God being thus superlatively excellent in himself, and divinely qualified for, and worthy of the highest honour; when through the dignity of his person he, as our great High Priest, preferable to all that went before him of the order of Aaron ‡, had alone, in his own person, made an actual and complete atonement for our sins, to purge us from their guilt, and take them away, not by any oblation of other expiatory sacrifices, which were insufficient for it, but by *the sacrifice of himself*, (Heb. ix. 26.) He then, in consequence of this, and in the virtue of his own blood, by office-right, in correspondence to his original dignity, ascended in our nature into the holy place, even heaven itself, (chap. ix. 12.) to take possession, as a priest upon his throne, (Zech. vi. 13.) of the highest dignity and glory, which may be represented in figurative terms, after the manner of men, by his sitting with quietness and safety, pre-eminence and grandeur, at the right hand of God the Father, whose majesty and greatness are displayed with the utmost magnificence and lustre in the upper world. — (See the note on Acts vii. 55.)

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance.

4 This glorious Person, by whom God has spoken to us in these last days, infinitely surpasses, not only all the ancient prophets and priests, but also the highest angels themselves; he being in his divine nature ||, and office-

#### N O T E S.

† “By the word of his power,” seems to mean by the word of *his own power*, “by whom all things consist.” But whether we refer it to his *own* or his *Father's* power, it is in effect all one, since the divine power, of the Father and Son is really the same in both: And if we refer it to the *Father's* power, this shews that the Father's making the worlds by the Son, ver. 2. no more denotes an inferior instrumentality of the Son in creating them, than the Son's upholding all things by the word of his Father's power denotes an inferior instrumentality of the Father's power in upholding them; but that the same divine power is exerted by each of them in both those operations.

‡ As the apostle had shewn in the two preceding verses, that Christ is more excellent than all the prophets that went before him; so he here suggests his transcendent excellency above all the Levitical priests, which is the grand argument of this epistle, while the prophetic and kingly offices are here and there touched in the process of it;

and so he speaks of Christ's purging our sins, which is to be understood in a sacrificial sense, as in Lev. xvi. 30. with respect to his taking away the guilt of sin by his expiating blood, whereby “the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God,” in opposition to the blood of bulls and of goats that was sufficient for this purpose, and “only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh.” Chap. ix. 13, 14.

|| The apostle having begun with considering the person of Christ, both in his divine and office-characters, to shew his preference to the ancient prophets and priests, ver. 1.—3. He keeps up the view of both those characters, in comparing Christ with the angels, to shew how far he also excels them. Accordingly some of the following quotations, to prove his superiority to the angels, relate immediately to his divine nature, and others to his mediatorial office, which is founded upon it, and could not be discharged, and rendered effectual without it; and all together, in one or the other,

heritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

office-capacity, which is founded upon it, alike superior to them, as he really and originally is so much more excellent than all the angels in his own divine person †, and is so by the appointment and constitution of the Father, as God-Man Mediator; and is manifested to be as much above them in his state of exaltation, as is answerable to that more glorious, emphatical, and significant title, which he is honoured with by the Father himself, (*ver. 5.*) and which he has received by right of inheritance, as the natural and appointed heir of all things, (see the paraphrase on *ver. 2.*); a title far more excellent, than any name that belongs, or ever was given with such peculiarity and eminence, to any, even of the highest angels. The special name or title which I mean, and which is expressive of the dignity of his person, and appropriated to him, is that of the *Son of God*.

3 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.

5 For, to consider this matter first with respect to his *divine nature*, to which of the angelic spirits, even of the highest order and dignity amongst them, did God ever speak with an emphasis and peculiarity, as he did to our Lord Jesus Christ; when, referring to the formal reason of his Sonship, he said to him, (*Pf. ii. 7.*) Thou art my essential Son, whom I have begotten from eternity; which, for unalterable permanency of duration, may be called one continued unsuccessive day \*.

And

#### N O T E S.

and unitedly in both those considerations of him, are an uncontrollable and illustrious evidence of the superlative dignity of the person of Christ above the most exalted angels. And it was highly proper to demonstrate his pre-eminence above them: because the Jews insisted on, and boasted of the excellency of their law, as it was delivered by the ministration of angels according to what is said about it, chap. ii. 2. compared with Deut. xxxiii. 2. *Pf. lxxviii. 17.* Acts vii. 53. and Gal. iii. 19.: And though, as I apprehend, Christ was the Jehovah that delivered the law by the disposition of angels, which gave a divine authority to it; yet the gospel appears to be still more glorious, and the neglect of it is spoken of as to be still more dreaded, chap. ii. 2, 3. because God spoke it to us, not by the ministry of angels as he did the law, but immediately in and by the ministry of his own incarnate Son: For the stress of the argument lies, not in any difference as to the divine authority of the original author of one and the other, which is the same, whether it were God the Father, or God the Son, that delivered the law at

mount Sinai by the ministration of angels; but it lies in the vastly superior excellency of the Son as the immediately ministering person by whom the gospel is spoken to us.

† The word (*γεννητας*) here translated *made*, very often signifies, and is rendered is; and so it expresses what Christ really is, and may respect his being originally in himself more excellent than the angels; at other times it signifies *manifested to be*, as it might be rendered in Mat. v. 45. and John xv. 8. and so Christ's being more excellent than the angels, may relate to the evidence and demonstration with which God manifests or declares him to be so: And at other times it signifies *made or ordained*, as in Mark ii. 27. and so Christ's being made more excellent than the angels, may refer to the office-exaltation of his incarnate person, after he had, in his state of humiliation been made lower than the angels.

\* In the former part of this verse God the Father speaks of what he had already done in begetting his Son; but, in this last clause he speaks of what he would be to him. Accordingly I take the former of these to relate

And again, with respect to his *office-capacity*, correspondent to his original Sonship, Of which of the angels has God the Father said, as he did of Christ in another prophecy of him, (2 Sam. vii. 14. and 1 Chron. xvii. 13.) I will own myself to be his Father, and him to be my Son, by an extraordinary conception and birth in human nature, and will treat him accordingly, with eminent tokens of my peculiar love, protection, and care of him, whom I will exalt to his kingdom? (See 1 Chron. xvii. 14. and Luke i. 32, 33.)

6 And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

6 And again, to show that he is in reality a divine Saviour, infinitely more excellent than the highest angels, we have another testimony to him in Ps. xcvi. 7. <sup>†</sup> where, with reference to God's introducing this Lord and heir of all into our world at his miraculous birth of a virgin, in order to his going through the work of mediation upon earth, and his consequent exaltation to the throne of his glory in heaven, and his coming to judge the world at the last day, God the Father commanded even all his holy angels themselves to offer religious adoration to him, as to his own incarnate Son, and to pay all divine honours to him, as such; which supposes him to be God their Creator, and them

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to his natural Sonship by an eternal inconceivable generation, which was manifested by his resurrection, (see the note on chap. v. 8.); and the second to his Father's acknowledgement and treatment of him as his incarnate Son and Mediator: And so the argument for the superior dignity of his person proceeds in this verse from his divine to his office-character, and from thence to both these considerations of him jointly, ver. 6,—9; and it winds up with a strong proof of his being indeed the great, eternal and unchangeable God, that made the earth and the heavens, and will remain the same after they shall all perish, ver. 10,—12. (See the note there.) Mr. Pierce in his note upon the last quotation in this verse has, I think, abundantly proved by several arguments, that it is taken from the prophecy in 2 Sam. vii. 14. and 1 Chron. xvii. 13. where the words are exactly the same. The only difficulty that seems to lie against this interpretation is what follows 2 Sam. vii. 14. where it is added, "If he commit iniquity," "I will chasten him with the rod of men," "and with the stripes of the children of men," which is by means applicable to Christ himself. But that learned writer sufficiently answers this, by showing that, according to the meaning and frequent use of the relative term, (*אשר*) even where the demonstrative pronoun before it is omitted, it ought to be rendered *whosoever*, meaning

whoever of the "Messiah's children commit iniquity, I will chasten him," &c. and thus this very prophecy is commented upon in Ps. lxxxix. 30,—33.

<sup>†</sup> And again, seems not to relate to God's bringing Christ into the world again at his resurrection, as some suppose: For the word (*συνεγεννησεν*) here rendered *the world*, when put absolutely without any other addition, constantly relates to this habitual earth or world, as Dr. Owen observes; or to some part of it, such as the Land of Judca, or the Roman empire: But the resurrection of Christ was rather in order to his "leaving" this world and going to the Father: (John xvi. 28.) then to his being "brought again" into this world, from which his body was never removed, and in which he never afterwards appeared, except to his own disciples. Again, therefore, by a usual transposition or transposing of the Greek sentence, may rather be joined to *he says*, as our version has put it; and so it bears the same sense, and is taken in the same way, as in the foregoing verse, to lead us on to another testimony concerning Christ, relating to the time when he was brought into our world, in order to his erecting a kingdom of grace in it, and being advanced to the throne of his glory, as head over all things to the church, and so God's bringing him into the world includes his incarnation, and all that followed upon it in his life, death, resurrection, exaltation,

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

to be the work of his hands; otherwise they would never have been ordered to pay such homage to him, as is the unalienable right of Deity. (See *Mat. iv. 10.*)

7 And still further to shew how much the angels are beneath him, God, speaking concerning them, says, He makes those noblest of all his creatures, even those spiritual and intellectual beings† the angels themselves, his servants to execute his will and commandments, with strength, speed, and activity like the winds; and makes those, his ministering spirits, fervent, powerful, and penetrating in their agency, like the very lightning, or any flame of fire.

8 But in much loftier strains of language, God in the scripture says to his only begotten and eternal Son, *Pf. xiv. 6, 7.*) As, O thou truly divine person<sup>6</sup>, thy natural and essential dominion, which is emblematically represented by a prince's sitting on his throne, is everlastingly and unchangeably the same, without beginning or end ‡; So thy mediatorial throne of government shall remain, 'till all its ends be thoroughly accomplished; and the honour of it, together with the complete happiness of thy subjects, shall abide for ever and ever, even after the manner of administering thy kingdom on earth shall cease, and thou shalt have delivered it up to the Father, that according to the original state of things, God, inclusive of all the divine persons, may be all in all that farther pertains to it. (See the note on *1 Cor. xv. 24, — 28.*) The rule which thou bearest in thy kingdom is full of equity, truth, and holiness, that run through all thy laws and government: Thou art intitled to this government upon principles of righteousness; and thy reign, of which a sceptre is the royal ensign, is in all rec-

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titude,

exaltation, and effusion of his Spirit, for the sitting up of his throne and kingdom in this lower world, and exercising dominion over all, till he shall come to judgment\*. Accordingly *Pf. xvil. 7.* from whence these words are quoted, begins ver. 1. with calling "upon" the earth, and the multitudes of isles to "rejoice" on account of "his reigning," who is here called "the first-begotten," and in *Pf. lxxxix. 27.* "the first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," though none were so begotten or born afterwards, to intimate his pre-eminence, and that there was none before him, in allusion to the dignity of the first born under the law, who was so called, whether any were born after him or not.

† It is plain that *Psal. civ. 4.* from whence this quotation is made, speaks, as it is here rendered *of*, and not *to* the angels; and tho' the word in the Greek (*προς*) most commonly signifies *to*; yet it is sometimes used for *of* or *concerning*, as it might be rendered in *Mark xii. 11.* and *Rom. x. 21.* And as *spirits* (*πνεύ-*

*ματα*) signify also *winds*, it seems most natural to suppose, that the angels in the first clause, are compared to the winds, as they are in the next to a flame of fire; and since the apostle designed to show the preference of Christ to the angels in their ministrations of the law, chap. ii. 2, 3. perhaps here may be some reference to their agency in forming the terrible thunders, lightnings, and tempest at Mount Sinai, which are spoken of in *Exod. xix. 16.* and *Heb. xii. 18.*

\* O God (*Θεός*) in the singular number is never used absolutely, or without a restriction to some peculiar consideration of it, as it is here, of any but the only true God.

‡ Though I take Christ's mediatorial throne to be most immediately intended in this passage; yet as this is founded upon, and corresponds to his original dominion as God, and he had been spoken of in his divine and mediatorial characters in the preceding verses, I thought proper to keep that in view, which in the strictest sense is *per ever and ever*.

titude, and with sanctifying influence over righteous subjects.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

9 Yea, such is thy regal dignity, and thy worthiness of it, that not only thy laws and administrations, but thy heart and nature are infinitely pure and holy: Thou hast the greatest delight in holiness, and hast thyself fulfilled all righteousness; and thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without the utmost detestation of it, and hast taken away its guilt from thy subjects by thy atoning blood, that thou mightest subdue its power in them by thy Spirit and grace. On account of all this, God, who prepared thee a body, and is thy covenant-God, and has entered into engagements with thee as God-man Mediator, and so in thy office-capacity is thy God, he has inaugurated and actually invested thee with all fulness of authority, in exalting thee with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, (Acts v. 31.) and has enriched thee with an unmeasurable fulness of the Spirit, that thou mightest give gifts to men, and shed them forth abundantly, (Ephes. iv. 8. and Acts ii. 33.); which, in allusion to the ancient modes of consecrating prophets, priests, and kings, may be expressed by his anointing thee with such an unction as is infinitely delightful to thee, and produces the most joyful effects upon thy subjects, even an unction far more excellent and abundant than ever was or will be given to any other, whether prophet, priest, or king, or saint, or angel, which in their measure have been, are, or shall be respectively partakers (*μετοχοι*) of offices, blessings, and joys with thee, and under thee.

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the

10 And to show that Christ is above all *titular* gods, and had an original right to universal dominion, antecedent to what is now given him, in his complex person and office-character, by special dispensation \*, It is further

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\* The word *and* is the apostle's *own*, for connecting this with the foregoing testimony, it not being in Psal. cii. 25. from whence this passage is quoted; and the form of address is just the same all along through both these recited testimonies, without the least intimation or appearance of a different person's being introduced in the application of them, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c. And Thou, Lord, in the beginning "hast laid the foundation of the earth," &c. Were we to suppose, with some, that this last testimony refers not to God the Son, but to the Father, I own that, after all I have met with to support this opinion, I cannot see to what purpose this passage is mentioned at all,

or how it any way suits the design of the argument in hand: But as it is an unquestionably just description of the *only true God* in creating work, it is very properly brought in here as applicable to Christ, to prevent all cavils, as though he were to be considered only as an under-agent, when it was said ver. 2. that *all things were made by him*; and so it is much to the apostle's purpose to prove the Son's original right of dominion, as Lord of all, because *he made the worlds*, ver. 3. as able to shew that he is *every way in nature*, as well as *office*, far more excellent than the angels and all creatures whatsoever, and that the creation of the world was to be ascribed to him, who is the author of the gospel; and



the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands :

further said of the Son, (*Pf. cii. 25, 26, 27.*) Thou, Jehovah, in the beginning, before any creatures existed, which of old were not in being, didst set fast the earth, as on its basis, that it might not be removed out of its place : And all the beauties, glories, and furniture of the whole fabric of the heavens, with all their pompous hosts of sun, moon, and stars, are the curious workmanship of thy infinite wisdom and almighty power.

11 They shall perish but thou remainest : and they all shall wax old as doth a garment :

11 Both the earth and the heavens, and all the parts of this visible creation, firm and durable as some of them now appear to be, are of a corruptible nature, and in their season shall certainly pass away, and be totally dissolved, as to their present use and form : (*Mat. v. 18. and 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10,—13.*) But thou, O immortal Son of God ! always hadst, still hast, and wilt have an abiding and unchangeable existence. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God*, as is said of the great Jehovah of Israel : (*Pf. xc. 2.*) And as we daily see that all the creatures of this lower world grow old and gradually decay ; so the earth and the heavens, with all the visible things contained in them, shall wear out, and, at length, become unfit to answer their present design, like an old rotten garment.

12 And as a vestire shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

12 And as a garment is easily put off, folded up and laid aside at a man's pleasure, when 'tis no further serviceable, and he has either done with it, or designs to turn it to a new use ; so Thou, the Creator of all, wilt, by thine omnipotence, at the end of time, as easily *roll the heavens together as a scroll, and move every mountain and island out of their places* : (*Is. xxxiv. 4. and Rev. vi. 14.*) And by thy Almighty power thou wilt make such a wonderful alteration in them, that, instead of being annihilated and utterly destroyed, they shall be changed into *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness*, (*2 Pet. iii. 13.*) when thou wilt unfold them again for the still greater glory of thy name. But thou thyself art eternally and invariably the same in thy being and perfections, *without beginning of days or end of life* : And in thy love and care of thy people,

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not at all to the angels, by whose ministration the law was given, as though they were employed in creating work, according to the fond imagination of some of the Jews : And that *Psal. cii.* from whence this citation is made, relates to the *Messiah*, appears from

several verses in it, as particularly from *ver. 13, 15, 16, 18, 22.* and therefore this grand description of God, as eternal and unchangeable, and as the Creator of all, may well be supposed to belong to the *person of Christ*, as the apostle has here applied it.

people, and the efficacy of thy mediation, *Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* (Heb. vii. 3. and xiii. 8.)

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool?

13 But which of the angels can once be compared with this glorious Saviour in his infinite dignity, as *that* appears from what has been observed about his divine nature and office-exaltation: Which of them, even of the highest of these excellent spirits, has God the Father thought worthy of so transcendent an honour, as ever to say to any one of them, as he did to his incarnate Son, (*Pf. cx. 2.*) Sit thou enthroned in majesty, power, and glory at my right hand, and continue thou to reign on thy mediatorial throne, till sin, Satan, death, and all thine and thy churches enemies be actually and absolutely subdued, and 'till thou triumph over them, like vanquished rebels under thy feet, according to my appointment?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

14 On the contrary, Are not all these spiritual beings placed in an infinitely lower rank, (*Pf. ciii. 21.*) even the most eminent of them, as but messengers and servants of Christ, whom he commissions and employs merely in a ministerial way, as formerly in delivering the law at mount *Sinai*, so continually still in offices of protection, care, and kindness, and in many important services in life and death, for the benefit of those that, by inheritance through grace, are appointed to, and (*μετακληρονομία*) shall actually inherit eternal life under him, and in his right, who is their head, and the prime heir of all things? (*ver. 2.*)

## RECOLLECTIONS.

With what satisfaction may we depend upon the divine authority of both the Old and New Testament! God, who formerly spoke to the fathers by the prophets, now speaks to us by his Son; he began and gradually carried on various revelations at different times, in distinct parcels, and by several ways and means, which we have an account of in the Old Testament, till he completed them in the New. How thankful should we be that our lot is cast under the gospel-dispensation! This is the clearest, the fullest, the best, and last discovery of the mind and will of God, that is to be expected in our world. And how glorious is the representation it gives us of Christ in his divine nature and mediatorial office! He is *essentially* the same God with the Father, and yet *personally* distinct from him, as the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and is his eternal only begotten Son; he is the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things contained therein, and upholds them by the word of his power: And in his office-capacity he is the appointed heir of all things, in and by whom we inherit the blessings of grace and glory. It is he, and he only, that has taken away our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and is now exalted on his throne, with the highest dignity and honour, at the Father's right hand; his throne is for ever and ever; he is infinitely pure and spotless in himself, and righteous in all the administrations of his kingdom; he is fully invested with all authority above what-ever was or shall be conferred on any prophet, priest or king, saint or angel; and at the last day, he, who is the unchangeable God, will put an end to the present frame of this world, and change it into another, that will be incomparably more excellent

excellent and glorious. How safe and happy then are the saints under his care! And what an honour has he put upon them, in assuming their nature, and exalting it in union with his own divine person in heaven, and in ordering all the holy angels to minister to them! O, with what solemnity and joy should they join with these celestial spirits in paying all religious adorations to him! And how dead should their hearts be to this perishing world and all its concerns, which wax old, and shall be laid aside like a useless worn-out garment! But, after all the changes of the present scene of things, they themselves shall inherit eternal salvation with him.

## C H A P. II.

*The apostle infers from what he had said about the dignity of Christ's person and office, the duty of stedfastly adhering to him and his gospel, 1,—4. Reassumes his argument about Christ's pre-eminence above the angels, and shews that his sufferings are no objection against it, 5,—9. Opens the ground and reason of his sufferings, and the fitness of that dispensation, which laid out his way through them to his mediatorial glory, 10,—13. And leads us to the incarnation of Christ, in opposition to his assuming the nature of angels, as necessary to the discharge of his priestly office, 14,—18.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

SINCE therefore Christ is such an excellent and divine person, so far superior to all preceding prophets, and even to the angels themselves, as has now been proved; *chap. i.*) † It, for this reason, (*δ α τολα*) highly concerns us, in point of duty and interest, even all and every one of us, that live under this more eminently glorious dispensation, than that delivered by *Moses* and by the ministration of angels, to attend the more diligently, affectionately and stedfastly unto; and with humble reverential faith and love, to esteem, embrace, meditate and reflect upon, and seriously endeavour to make a suitable use and improvement of, the great and interesting doctrines, which under the gospel-state we have heard, as delivered to us in the ministry of the word; and to retain them carefully in our hearts and memories, and persevere in our holy profession of them; lest, in some season and circumstances of life, through the corruption, heedlessness, treachery, and prejudices of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the sores of this evil world, or through any other means, we should be carried away from the truth, or be forgetful bearers of the word, and suffer it to slip out of our minds,

## N O T E.

† In this and the three following verses the apostle manifestly makes a practical application of the foregoing discourse, by way of inference from it, as appears by the par-

ticle *therefore*, with which he introduces it; and such digressions are very frequent in several other parts of this epistle, as we shall see in their course.

minds, like water that runs out of a leaking vessel †; or should suffer it to pass by us, as a stream, without making any good use of it; and so lose the benefit of the gospel, and perish under all its gracious administrations.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward:

2 For if *Moses's* law, which was given at mount Sinai by the ministration of angels, as *Christ's* messengers and servants to publish it, (*Acts* vii. 38, 53. see the paraphrase there,) was (*βέβαιος*) firm and valid, as established by divine authority, with an awful sanction to enforce it; and if every contemptuous violation of any precept of that law, by a sin of omission or commission; and every act of wilful disobedience to the authority of God in it, were severely punished upon the transgressor, who died without mercy, as the righteous retribution of his evil deeds,

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

3 How then is it possible that any of us, who have heard the gospel, should escape the dreadful wrath of God? How can we in our consciences expect to avoid condemnation, or imagine that his justice will excuse or spare us, or forbear executing the heaviest vengeance upon us; and *that* without mercy or remedy, for all our iniquities; and especially for our refusals and abuses of his grace, and of the only way of pardon and eternal life through Jesus Christ; if through unbelief or carelessness, we despise and reject, or disregard and do not embrace the word of salvation, (*Acts* xiii. 26, and *Ephes.* i. 13.) or the gospel, which brings salvation to lost sinners, (*Tit.* ii. 11.) as it displays its reality, nature, and excellency, shews us the way, and is the means of obtaining it, and is *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes?* (*Rom.* i. 16.) A salvation, not of a temporal and worldly, but of a spiritual, heavenly and eternal nature; a salvation which is the contrivance of such amazing counsels of wisdom and grace, and is procured by so great a price, and consists of deliverance from so great sin and misery, and of advancement to so great holiness, happiness and glory; and a salvation so complete and wonderfully comprehensive of all blessings, answerable to our utmost wants and desires, as surpasses all comprehension, thought or expression: The first clear publication of which, with-  
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#### N O T E.

† "Lest we should let them slip," or, as the margin renders, (*παρρησιασθῆναι*) *run out*, is a beautiful allusion to leaking vessels, with which our treacherous hearts and memories may well be compared; or, perhaps, it may al-

lude to waters that flow by us, but are made no use of; and in either of these views it may import defects in ourselves, through which we get no saving advantage by the gospel.

out the vail of types and shadows \*, was begun to be made personally and immediately by the Lord Jesus Christ himself in the days of his ministry upon earth, who is the Son of God, and the Lord of angels; and was further carried on, and certified to us of the *Jewish* nation, by many honest, undesigned, faithful witnesses, and *that* under divine inspiration, such as the evangelists, apostles and others, who themselves heard him deliver these blessed tidings of so great salvation, which he came to procure, and bestow upon them that should believe in him.

\* God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

4 To assure us of the infallible certainty of their witness, God himself also gave the most unquestionable testimony to their integrity, and to the truth of what they said, in an extraordinary manner, by abundance of miraculous operations and effects, which he wrought by them operations which may be called *signs* †, as they were signals of his owning and being with them, and were seals of the doctrine they preached: and may be called *wonders*, as they were uncommon and amazing appearances of God's almighty power and goodness; and may truly be called various kinds of *miracles*, as they were wrought by a divine agency, beyond, and even contrary to the ordinary course of nature; such as healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead, merely by speaking a word: And God still further bore witness to these his faithful servants, and confirmed their testimony, in a rich variety of supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the gifts of prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, and utterance; and the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; yea, and the gift of conveying these excellent endowments to other believers, as has frequently been done by the laying on of the apostle's hands: All which miraculous attestations from God are not only equal to, but far more excellent than those that he shewed in confirmation of the law of *Moses*, (Deu. vi. 22.) and are distributed

## N O T E.

\* 'Tis with great propriety that the apostle says, "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord:" For though Christ opened the gospel-dispensation in his personal ministry, he did not preach the whole of it; because several things pertaining to it were to be accomplished by his death, resurrection and ascension to heaven, and were not proper to be fully revealed; nor could they be spoken of as actually subsisting, nor be well received, till he went to the Father, and shed down his Spirit from on high: Accordingly he said to his disciples, John xvi.

11, 12. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now; howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth."

† *Signs, wonders, and miracles* seem to be much of the same import; but may be expressed under those several terms for reasons suggested in the paraphrase, which gives us a different view of what we more generally call *miracles*, even while we distinguish them from what are commonly called "the gifts of the Spirit."

distributed in all their different kinds and degrees to one and another of these witnesses, and to every one that has any of them, according to the good pleasure and sovereign operation of God by his Spirit, who, with the same divine sovereignty, divides them to every man severally, as he will. (1 Cor. xii. 11.)

5 For unto the angels: hath he not put in subjection the world to come; whereof we speak.

5 But to return to the comparison between Christ and the holy angels, This glorious person, I say, is far superior in his office-character, as well as in himself, to any of them: For how much soever they were employed in giving the law, (*ver.* 2.) or are made use of as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, (*chap.* i. 14.) God has not given them any authority or dominion over the New Testament church, and the things belonging to it; which, being to succeed the *Mosaic* dispensation, were commonly styled by the *Jews*, the world to come. God has no where spoke of bringing the gospel-church into any subjection to the angels, as if they were to be lords and rulers over it, or as if its doctrines, ordinances, and institutions, privileges, and blessings, were to be derived from them, or they were to publish and dispense its affairs; which are the things that I am speaking of, and shall further insist upon in this Epistle, as more excellent than any that ever went before them.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?

6 But all these things are owing to, and immediately depend upon the incarnate Son of God himself, of whom an inspired writer of the Old Testament speaks in a certain paragraph, (*Pf.* viii. 4, 5, 6.) where contemplating the magnificent works of God, he broke out into this rapturous and admiring exclamation, saying, How mean and inconsiderable a creature is man in himself, and compared with the vast expanse of the heavens, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained †, that

#### N O T E.

† The eighth psalm, from whence this and the two following verses are quoted, seems to have been composed by David in a clear, moon-shining and star-light night, when he was contemplating the wonderful fabric of the heavens: because in his magnificent description of its luminaries, he takes no notice of the sun, the most glorious of them all: And it appears to me, that the words here cited had a principal and ultimate reference to the Messiah, who is really a man, and is spoken of as *man*, and characterized as the *Son of man*, in the psalms and other parts of the Old Testament, (*Ps.* lxxx. 17. *Dan.* vii. 13. *Zech.* vi. 12, and xiii. 7.) as well as is called "the man Christ Jesus," in the New Testament, (*1 Tim.* ii. 5.) and often spoke of him-

self as "the Son of man: For if the following words in *Pf.* viii. were directly and confinedly meant of the first Adam, or of his posterity in general, the order of them would most naturally have been, "he was crowned with glory and honour, and made a little lower than the angels," since his honour was before his fall and abasement; and as the words (*ἄπαυτος*) "a little lower," *ver.* 7, might, I think, be better rendered, as they are in the margin, and *Acts* v. 34, "a little while, or for a little space," it should rather have been said, if applied to Adam, that he was a "little while crowned with glory and honour," than that he was a "little while made lower than the angels:" since his glory and honour was only for a

that thou shouldest condescend to shew such favour to him, as to dignify his nature in the incarnation of thy Son? Or what is the nature of man, considered merely as such, in the Messiah himself, whose distinguishing character is the *Son of man*, that thou shouldest, for the sake of mankind, raise him in human nature to the office of mediation, and enrich him with thy gifts and graces, and assist and own him in his work, and exalt him to his throne and kingdom, and give him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, (John xvii. 2.) and so by him shouldest visit the human race with such tender mercy, as to redeem thy people, and raise him up, as an *horn of salvation* for them in the house of thy servant David. (Luke i. 68, 69.)

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

7 Thou, in pursuit of this gracious and glorious design, didst place this Son of man for a small season in a state of deep humiliation, subject to miseries in soul and body, and to death itself, whereby, under thy forsakings, his condition was abundantly inferior to that of the holy angels, who *always behold thy face in heaven*, (Mat. xviii. 10.) and never die: (Luke xx. 36.) And when he had gone through a short course of humiliation, obedience and sufferings, even unto the most ignominious and painful death upon earth, Thou in consequence of it, and in recompence for it, didst raise him from the dead, and advance him, like a king to his throne, and solemnly inaugurate and invest him, like a prince at his coronation, in all mediatorial dignity and authority, honour and glory, at thine own right hand in the highest heavens, (Phil. ii. 8, 9.) and didst constitute him the absolute and universal Lord and Sovereign of all the creatures which thou hast made, (Ephes. i. 21, and 1 Pet. iii. 22.) that he might govern and order, over-rule and restrain them, and make them subserve the great designs of his kingdom, as *the head over all things to the church*. (Ephes. i. 22.)

8 Thou hast put all things in sub-

8 Thou hast subjected all thy works, from the highest to the lowest of them, to his dominion, that they may be

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small space of time before his fall, and his being made lower than the angels was continued all along after it. But as Christ was made not "a little only, but much lower," than the angels for a few years, as to his state and condition in the days of his humiliation upon earth; so he is now crowned with glory and honour to continue in his exalted state for ever: And how applicable soever some of the quoted passages, relating

to dominion, might be to Adam and his posterity in general; yet in their complete and highest sense, they could belong to none but the second Adam, as the universal Lord and Governor of all his creatures, and the triumphant Conqueror of all his enemies; nor would the apostle's quotation of them have been at all to his purpose, unless he had understood them to have been spoken of Christ.

subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

be entirely at his disposal; and hast given him an absolute power over all his and his church's enemies, sin, Satan, and death, that he may conquer, subdue and triumph over them, like slaves and captives under his feet; may disarm them of all their force; may trample upon them with indignation and contempt, like the dirt under his feet; and may execute his righteous wrath upon them\*.—This testimony of the *Psalmist* shews that he had a higher view, than to that original dominion which was given to man over the creatures of this lower world: For (as is there said *absolutely and universally*) when God put all things whatsoever, without exception or limitation, under him, it is evident that there is no work of his hands, no creature in heaven or earth, nor any affair relating to them, nor consequently to the gospel-church, that is not brought into subjection to him. But we plainly see, by observation and experience, that in so long a time as from the creation of the world to this very day, neither mankind in general, nor any one of them in particular, has an absolute and universal dominion over all things; and therefore these words, *Thou hast put all things in subjection under him*, cannot be applied in their full extent to Adam, or any of his natural descendents†: And, notwithstanding that full grant of authority and dominion, which is made to our Lord Jesus himself, It must indeed be allowed, that we as yet do not see that, in fact, all things are actually so reduced under him, as to have put an end to all the opposition of his and his people's enemies; the time for this being not yet come.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God

9 But (which cannot be said of any other man) we certainly know from the testimonies of inspired writers, whom God bore witness to, by divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, (*ver. 4.*) and by the great and wonderful effects of their doctrine upon the hearts and lives of innumerable converts from among Jews and Gentiles, thro' the attending power of the Spirit, which is

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\* Here ends the apostle's quotation from the *Psalms*, and what follows is his own arguing upon it.

† Dr. Owen and others understand this *him* to relate to *man in general*, in distinction from Jesus, who is mentioned, as they apprehend, in opposition to this *him* at the beginning of the next verse; and so the apostle denies that all things are put under him: But Beza; Piscator, Mr. Pierce and others understand this *him* as relating to Christ; and so

the last clause of this verse may be considered as an objection against his absolute and unlimited dominion, which is answered in the next verse, as seems to be intimated by the word *yet*, (*υετι*) *We see not yet all things put under him*, which implies that the time is coming when they shall be so. Now, though I incline most to this last sense, I would not be peremptory in it; and therefore have included both,



God should taste death for every man.

is shed down abundantly from the exalted Saviour; and we see by faith that the Lord Jesus, who for a little while, (see the note on *ver. 6*.) during the few years of his incarnation upon earth, was placed in a condition far inferior to the holy angels, that he might undergo the most terrible and abasing sufferings, even unto death; we are well assured, I say, that now in his human nature, as the reward of his sufferings and death, he is actually exalted to his heavenly throne, and is there incircled with the highest honours, and possessed of all the majesty and glory, dignity, authority, and power of his mediatorial kingdom, in which he must reign till all his enemies be effectually subdued under his feet. (1 Cor. xv. 25.) And as by the gracious appointment of God, in his infinite love and goodwill to men, Christ tasted the bitter cup of death\*, by actually dying in the room and stead of every one of the many sons (*ver. 10*.) that belong to him, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and by experimentally knowing the sorrows of that tremendous death which their sins deserved; so he, having done this, is exalted to all the honours of his throne, that he might be in full capacity to pursue and accomplish the great end of his death, in bringing them all safe to glory.

to For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

10 For how offensive soever the doctrine of a suffering Messiah be to the carnal *Jews*, who looked for a temporal, and not a spiritual salvation by him; It was every way right and fit, decent, decorous, and agreeable to the justice and holiness, wisdom and goodness, and indeed to all the perfections of God, who is the ultimate end, *for whom*, and the first cause, *by whom*, all things whatsoever were created, and the whole scheme of salvation was formed: It was, I say, infinitely

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\* *Tasting death*, is an *Hebraism* for *dying*: But the death of Christ was *not after* he was crowned with glory and honour, much less was he crowned, that he might taste death, as the order of these words may seem to intimate; for the scripture every where speaks of his death as preceding his exaltation. And therefore it is most consonant to the truth, and to the apostle's design, to understand, with Mr Pierce, that here is such an *ellipsis* or *syllipsis*, as is to be met with both in profane and sacred writers, and is a figure of speech that supplies the sense, though not exactly according to the structure of the words; and so it may stand thus, "Jesus was crowned with glory and honour, that, by the grace of God having tasted death, he might save every man."—But

that learned writer (notwithstanding his notion of universal redemption) further observes, that *every man*, for whom Christ tasted death, cannot be here meant of *all mankind*; but that the nature of the argument, and the scope of the context manifestly carry it under a limitation to all those who were before called the *heirs of salvation*, chap. i. 14. and are all along, after the verse before us, called, "the many sons who were to be brought to glory, the sanctified, Christ's brethren, and the church;" and we may add, *the children which God had given him*, *ver. 10*,—14. It also might be designed to show that this favour was not intended to be confined to the *Jews*, but to be extended likewise to the *Gentiles*.

ly becoming the great God himself, for the vindication of the rights and honour of his holy nature, law, and government, in his way of bringing an innumerable multitude, (Rev. vii. 9.) of adopted and regenerated sons to all the blessedness and glory of the heavenly state, to prepare his only begotten Son for this work, as the prince, leader, and author of eternal salvation \*, the whole accomplishment of which is lodged in his hands, and to perfect the consecration of him to his office, as a priest upon his throne, by means of his atoning sufferings and death on their behalf, and in their stead, that as sin has reigned unto death, so grace might reign thro' righteousness to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. v. 21.)

† For both he that sanctifies, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

† For both the Redeemer, who has taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, that its guilt may be expiated and its defilement removed, † and the redeemed, whose sins are purged away by his blood and spirit, and who are thereby devoted to God, and qualified for acceptably worshipping and serving him, are all of one blood, (Acts xvii. 26.) Partakers of one and the same human nature from one common parent; Christ having assumed their nature into personal union with himself, and that in the same state and condition of weakness, affliction, and mortality with themselves, sin only excepted, (ver. 17. and chap. iv. 15.) that he might have something to offer, and they might have the benefit of it †; and they are all of one heavenly Father, under

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\* The Captain of salvation (ἀρχηγὸς σωτηρίας) properly signifies the Leader, and is rendered the Prince, and the Author, (Acts iii. 25. and v. 31. and Heb. xii. 2.) which are the only places besides in the New Testament, where this term is used; and in all these places it is applied to Christ: And this Captain of salvation being made perfect, according to different acceptations of the word, (τελειώσας) which is sometimes rendered to perfect, chap. vii. 19. and ix. 9.) and at others to consecrate, (chap. vii. 28.) may relate to his being both completely fitted in, and consecrated to that part of his office which he was to carry on in heaven, and for the fulfilling of which he was crowned with the glory and honour mentioned in the preceding verse.

† Sanctified and justified (οἱ ἁγιασμένοι καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι) are, I think, constantly used through this epistle in the sacrificial sense, with a reference to legal purifications for separation, or dedication to God, and being fitted for his service; or for cleansing from the guilt of sin: But when they relate to the

sanctification of believers, in virtue of the blood of Christ, as they do here, and in chap. x. 10, 14. they may well be supposed to include also an "internal work of holiness," which was signified by external purifications with water and blood, (according to the more common acceptation of these words in other epistles) as it was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is effected in consequence thereof by the sanctification of the Spirit.

† Of one (ἑνός) is both the masculine and neuter gender, and may accordingly mean of one person, or of one thing, and not very consistently with each other, and with the apostle's argument; though their being all of one nature seems to be most directly intended.—A learned expositor has conjectured, that all of one means that Christ and the sanctified are all of one Father, Abraham, as he and all believers have the same faith with Abraham. But though this may be a good reason for Christ's calling them brethren, I do not see how it shows that it became God

under a wife, holy, and gracious constitution, whereby they are *legally one*, and included in *one covenant*. And therefore; great and glorious as Christ is, and mean and contemptible as they are, he does not disdain, but condescends to take them into the near and endearing relation of brethren to himself, who is *the first-born among many brethren*, (Rom. viii. 29.) and to own them with pleasure under that relation, as he did after his resurrection, (*John* xx. 17.) and will publicly do in the day of judgment; (*Mat.* xxv. 40.) And this corresponds to the representation which was made in the prophetic writings of his calling them *brethren*.

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

12 Saying to his Father, (*Pf.* xxii. 22.) I will make known the glory of thy perfections and councils, ways and works, to the honour of thy great name, with reference to the scheme of salvation, by opening it first in my personal ministry, and afterwards carrying it on in plainer and more extensive discoveries, 'till it be perfected, in the ministry of my servants, and by the illumination of my Spirit, that it may be fully manifested to thy children, to whom I stand nearly related by sameness of nature and covenant-constitution, as my brethren. I will joyfully celebrate \* and publish the wondrous praises of thy love, to thy glory among them, whom thou hast chosen, called, and sanctified to be a peculiar church and people unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I, and the children which God hath given me.

13 And again, in another prophetic representation of Christ, he is brought in as saying in the language of *David*, his type, (*Pf.* xviii. 2.) like one that has communion with his brethren in human affections, sufferings and graces, as well as in nature, "I will place all my trust and confidence in the Lord, who is *my rock; and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength;* (as it follows in that *psalm*;) My dependence shall be entirely upon him to maintain my cause, to support me under, and carry me through all my trials and difficulties, to make me triumph over them, and to reward me for them in my own personal exaltation, and in effectually bringing the many sons to glory," (*ver.* 10.) And with a like acknowledgment of his relation

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in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, which is the very thing that the former part of this verse is brought to prove.

\* If singing praises is to be taken literally, our Lord did this with his disciples, the only gospel-church that has had then upon earth, a little before his death, when they sung an

hymn at the close of the institution and celebration of the eucharist. (*Mat.* xxvi. 30.) But if we take it in a laxer sense, for "setting forth the praises of" God's name, this Christ has done, still does, and will continue to do through all generations in the church, by his word and spirit, in its various ministrations and ordinances of divine worship,

lation to them as brethren, he says in another place, (Isa. viii. 18.) Behold, here am I, ready to do and suffer all that thou callest me to for the redemption of the children, whom thou in eternal councils of wisdom, love, and grace, hast given me, as my property and charge, that I might deliver them from all evil, and sanctify them for thy service, and for an enjoyment of thee; and that I might own, and take care of them, as my dear brethren, amidst all the scorn and reproach of men upon earth, and conduct them safe to heaven: And behold, I present them together with myself to thee, for thine acceptance, and for their everlasting happiness.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that thro' death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

14 Since then (*οτι νυν*) the children, which God had given to his Son to be saved by him, were of the human race, and (*και κοινωνουσι*) had communion with the rest of mankind in human nature, as consisting not only of an immortal soul, but likewise of a mortal body of flesh and blood, which was capable of dying; he also, who had an eternal pre-existence, as God condescended voluntarily to assume true human nature with all its essential properties, and natural, though sinless, infirmities, into personal union with himself, really and exactly according to their own likeness; (*καταμορφωσας εαυτον εικονι*) and so was allied as a near kinsman to them, that the right of representation might lye in him, and that he, in the same nature which sinned, might make a proper satisfaction to the law and justice of God for it; to the end that (*ινα*) by means of his meditorious death, which he suffered in their room and stead, to take away their sins and the curse of the law, and to purchase a resurrection to eternal life, he might vanquish and (*καταργησεν*) entirely overthrow, or make void the power of that great destroying adversary, the devil, who, as a murderer from the beginning, was the means of bringing sin and death upon them by the first transgression; and as an executioner of divine justice, had an empire over death to inflict it in a penal way upon obstinate and incorrigible sinners, whenever God might permit him; and to be afterwards their everlasting tormentor in the second death.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

15 And when Satan thought to have triumphed over Christ himself, by bringing him into the territories of death, This Captain of salvation utterly defeated him, as it were on his own ground; and by that very means, which seemed of all others the most unlikely, and by which he himself seemed to be overcome, he disarmed that grand adversary of all his power, that in the virtue of his own death he might ransom all his children from the King and

and terrors of death, and from its dominion over them; and might, in the effectual application of his blood, actually free them from the guilt and power of sin, and give them a complete victory and triumph over death itself, (1 Cor. xv. 26, 55, 56, 57.) even them, who through their formidable thoughts of death, or of its dreadful consequences, or of both, were all their lives long before liable to be sadly inflamed in their own minds, and afraid to die, whether they were *Jews* under the terrors of the legal dispensation, or *Heathens*, that had no hope of a better world beyond the grave.

16 For to accomplish these important ends, it is most certainly true, that our blessed Lord did not lay hold on the nature of angels, to take that into personal union with himself, as though he had intended to recover any from among them that fell from their original rectitude and happiness †; but, passing by the angelic nature, he graciously condescended to lay hold on, and unite to himself, the far more inferior nature of man, and to give it a peculiar subsistence in his own divine person, as he derived it from the patriarch *Abraham*, to whom God promised, that, *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.* (Gen. xxii. 18. and xxvi. 4.)

17 We may therefore infer from all this, that, in order to Christ's duly answering the great design of his office, as their Redeemer and Saviour, it was highly fit and needful, and in the reason of things every way proper, that he should partake of their nature in all things that essentially belong to it, and should come under their trials and sufferings, and indeed should be in every thing, as far as possible, in the like condition with those brethren of his whom he was to bring safe to glory, (ver. 10, 11.) that so by his own experience of sufferings,

## N O T E.

† "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels," is understood by some to signify, according to the rendering in the margin, "he did not take hold of the angels," to help or rescue them; "but he took hold of the seed of Abraham," to help or rescue them. But though I would not wholly exclude that sense, in connection with the other, which lies in the text of our version; yet Christ's assuming human nature in his incarnation, and not the nature of angels, seems to be most immediately intended, answerable to the whole scope of the context: and these words may be rendered without the supplement of *nature*, which is added to the Greek in our translation, *he did not take to him of the angels*, that is, not any one of them, but he took to him of the seed of Abra-

ham; or, with the supplement, *He did not take to him the nature of angels; but took to him the nature of the seed of Abraham*; where human nature is expressed by the seed of Abraham; because our Lord derived it from Abraham according to the Old Testament prophecies concerning him; and because he therein had a peculiar respect to the spiritual seed of Abraham; And this might with propriety enough be called "Christ's taking to him, or taking hold of," (*παραλαβειν*) not the nature of angels, but the human nature of the line of Abraham; because in his incarnation he assumed human nature into personal union with himself, and so laid hold of it in the most intimate and endearing manner possible, in order to his rescuing and saving it.

sufferings, which he underwent for their sakes, in their nature and in their stead, he might be the better qualified, and the more feelingly engaged, to act the part of a compassionate, tender-hearted high priest, and might be the more touchingly stirred up to acquit himself with all fidelity, in the discharge of his great undertaking for them, with relation to what he was to do with God on their behalf, in a way of satisfaction to his justice, for healing the breach which sin had made between him and them, and procuring peace and reconciliation with God for them; whom he represented and acted for, as taken from among men, and as therein typified by the high priest under the law; (see chap. v. 1.)

18 For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

18 And as the typical high priest could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way, for that he himself also was compassed about with infirmities, (chap. v. 2.) This is most remarkably and eminently true of Christ: For, in as much as, and in the very thing, (v. 2) in which he himself underwent the severest tribulations, when he was in a state of trials and sufferings from Satan and the world, from the desertions of his Father and his own disciples, and from the reproaches and persecutions of his enemies, and his various troubles in soul and body; He, having triumphed over all these sorts of temptations in his own person, is both capable, inclined, and willing to support, comfort, and relieve all his brethren, that are exercised with any like afflictions and trials; as well remembering what he suffered by them, and well knowing how to make those dear objects of his sympathy and compassion, as victorious over them as he himself was.

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How much more excellent and important is the gospel of Christ, than the law of Moses! This was indeed spoken by the ministration of angels, and was divinely established; but that began to be spoken immediately in person by the incarnate Son of God himself, who is, both by nature and office, infinitely superior to the angels in heaven: and this blessed gospel is confirmed to us by many faithful witnesses, who heard it from his own mouth, and were empowered still farther to publish it, with infallible certainty, in all its extent and glory; God himself at the same time bearing witness to the truth of their testimony by various wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the good pleasure of his will. And O what a great salvation, comprehensive of all spiritual and eternal blessings and surpassing all thought, does the gospel bring to them that by faith receive it! With what care and diligence then should we attend to it, that we may embrace and retain it, and not let it slip out of our thoughts and hearts without any practical and saving improvement of it! If it were just in God to punish the despisers of Moses's law, and they suffered accordingly, how much heavier vengeance will he certainly take on the neglecters of his Son's gospel? But how astonishingly condescending is divine grace to mankind! Christ, passing by the angels, assumed our inferior nature, as derived from Abraham, into personal union with himself: And we may well cry out with admiration and joy, O what is man, that thou shouldst visit him in

this kind manner by the Son of man! How low was our Lord brought for a little while! He was lower than the angels in his state of humiliation, when, as the fruit of mere grace to the children of whom God hath given him, he tasted the bitterest cup of death for their redemption. And how eminently is he now exalted in his mediatorial character in consequence of his sufferings, and as the righteous reward of them! The New Testament-church, and all its affairs, yea, all God's works of nature and providence are already put under his dominion; and though all his enemies are not yet actually subdued, they must at length fall before him. How highly is God glorified in his appointed way of salvation through a crucified and exalted Redeemer! This is a way becoming himself, who is the first cause and last end of all things: All the perfections of his nature, together with his law and government, shine forth with harmonious and illustrious honour in bringing a vast multitude of his sons to glory through the Captain of their salvation, who was perfected for the remainder of his office by sufferings, and was one with them in such an intimacy of nature and relation, as is a proper foundation of his undertakings and performances on their behalf, and his of owning them and regarding them as his brethren. He died, that he might reconcile them to God, and sanctify them for access to him and holy communion with him; that he might destroy the power of the devil, who brought sin and death into the world, and triumphed in the regions of mortality; and that he might take away the sting of death, and deliver his brethren from its penal consequences, who all their lives long before had been brought into bondage by its terrors. And O what a merciful and faithful high priest is Christ! How effectually has he procured his peoples reconciliation to God by his blood! and how compassionately does he sympathize with them under all their temporal and spiritual trials, in remembrance of the bitterness of his own suffering the like for them; that he might seasonably help and relieve them in their most afflictive circumstances, till he carries them safe through all to eternal glory!

## C H A P. III.

*The apostle shows the superior worth and dignity of Christ, in his person and prophetic office, particularly above Moses, 1,—6. And represents to the Hebrews, from the example of their unbelieving ancestors, the sin and danger of infidelity and apostasy, and the necessity of faith in Christ, and of a stedfast adherence to him, in order to their entering into the heavenly rest, 7,—19.*

## TEXT.

W<sup>h</sup>ile, therefore, ho-  
ly brethren,  
partakers of the  
heavenly calling,  
consider the apo-  
stle and high  
priest of our pro-  
fession, Christ Je-  
sus;

## PARAPHRASE.

**S**INCE the great author of the gospel is so far more excellent than all the former prophets, and even than the angels themselves, as has been observed, (*chap. i. ii.*); Therefore, my dear brethren, who are so, not only by nation as Jews, but, in the judgment of charity by grace as Christians, and are brethren to our Lord himself, and to one another; and who by your profession and obligations are an holy people, separated to him and devoted to his service, as being sanctified by his blood and spirit, (*chap. ii. 11.*); who also are admitted to a partnership with the whole body of true believers in all the privileges and blessings of the gospel, to which ye are called by special grace, and which are of an heavenly nature, and relate to the heavenly state, as tending

to it, and certainly issuing in it, according to your *high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, (Phil. iii. 14.) ; Let me beseech you to go along with me in farther attentively considering, and seriously reflecting upon, the super-eminent dignity of the glorious Son of God, of whose person and office I have been speaking, who is emphatically *the sent of God*, as the Father's divine messenger, *by whom he has spoken to us in these last days*, (chap. i. 2.) ; who is also our great high priest to *purge our sins, and make reconciliation for them*, as has been declared, (chap. i. 3. and ii. 17.) and as we profess to believe and own concerning him ; and so is the author, life, and glory of our heavenly calling, and of our holy profession of his name, and of all our regards and hopes toward God through him, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true and anointed Saviour.

1 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

2 Who executed his *prophetic office* \* with all fidelity to God his Father, as he, according to eternal counsils, and ancient prophecies, ordained and called him to it, constituted him in it, and sent him to fulfil it : He made known his Father's name, and the whole of his mind and will, relating to the faith, worship, obedience, and salvation of the church in every particular, and exactly according to his appointment ; as it also must be owned, to the honour of *Moses*, the most famous of all the ancient prophets, (Numb. xii. 7) that he, who was therein a type of Christ, faithfully discharged the office committed to him, in communicating the laws and ordinances which belonged to that dispensation, *according to all that God commanded him*, (Ex. xl. 16.) relating to the church of *Israel*, which then was God's household or family, (Numb. xii. 7.) as his church is, and may well be called, (1 Tim. iii. 15.) ; because he has prepared and set it apart for himself, has a peculiar property in it, presides over it, and dwells with a special and gracious presence of light and influence in it.

3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

3 Consider, I say, what a superlatively excellent one Christ is : For this glorious person, (*ὁ υἱος*) who is truly, but not merely man, was infinitely more honourable in himself, and is to be esteemed as every way worthy of much greater glory than *Moses*, in his relation to the church : notwithstanding all the honour which that eminent man of God justly obtained for his fidelity in his

#### N O T E.

\* Here the apostle, comparing Christ with *Moses*, attends most immediately, as I think, to his *prophetic office*, as the apostle of our profession, (*ver. 1.*) and afterwards proceeds

to discourse particularly and at large, on his *priesthood* chap. iv. xiv. and in several following chapters.



his high employment, as a minister of the law, Christ really is as much more excellent in his person and office, and as much to be preferred to him, as the lord and master of his house or family, who is the former and owner of it, and has prepared, erected and governs it, is, in all reason, to be counted worthy of higher honour and glory than the family itself, or any member of it, (and *Moses* was no more,) which derives from him, owes its being and all its advantages to him, and is his peculiar property for his own pleasure, use, and service.

4 For every house is buikled by some man: but he that buikl all things is God.

4 For as in the literal, so in the civil, political and religious sense of the word, every house is prepared, erected, and fitted up (*οὐκ οὐκ*) by some principal founder and proprietor of it: But he that is the great builder of the church, as his own house, † that has provided all its materials, and ordered all its affairs for his own glory, both under the *Jewish* and gospel-dispensation, is, and cannot but be, God himself; it is his prerogative, and none but he could be their author; and so Christ, who is the great master-builder of the church, bears the super-eminent dignity of *God* in his relation to it.

5 And *Moses* verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

5 And to carry on this similitude, and apply it to the case in hand, it is indeed true, as has been observed, (*ver. 2.*) that *Moses* acted a very faithful and upright part in delivering the divine laws and ordinances about every thing that related to the church of God under the Old Testament-dispensation: Only it must be remembered, that what he did therein, was not as *the Lord and proprietor*, but merely in the quality of a *ministering servant* in God's house; he being so, and nothing more, to give a prefigurative representation to the *Israelites* of those great and excellent things of the gospel, which were afterwards to be more clearly revealed at large under the New Testament, and were witnessed to by his law, (*Rom. iii. 21.*) even such things as have been

# N O T E.

† "He that built," (*οὐκ οὐκ*) signifies "he that prepared, furnished, and set in order," as well as "he that built;" and is never used to express God's work of creating; nor would it all suit the apostle's argument to understand him, as speaking of the "creation of all things," universally. But this word is often used to signify God's preparing such things as relate to the church and his worship: Thus in *Mat. xi. 10.* *Mark i. 2.* *Luke i. 17.* and *vii. 27.* it is used for preparing or making ready the way of the Lord: and *Ileb. ix. 2, 6.* for "making the

"tabernacle," and ordering things relating to it, and it is used for Noah's preparing an ark. *Heb. xi. 7.* and *1 Pet. iii. 20.* which are all the places besides where it occurs as far as I find in the New Testament: And therefore when the apostle says, "He that builds all things is God," it is most natural to consider it with reference only to all those things that were the subject of the foregoing discourse, relating to the church under the figure of a house. See Dr. Owen on the place.

been, and are to be still more particularly explained in this epistle.

5 But Christ as a Son over his own house : whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

6 But Christ is so infinitely superior to *Moses*, that, tho' he graciously condescended to take upon him the form of a servant in his human nature and office-capacity ; yet in what he has done relating to his house or family, he acted, not merely the part of a servant, but also of the Lord, and master, like the son and heir of his own house, which is peculiarly his, as well as the *Father's*, as he has purchased the church with his own blood ; has gathered it together, and formed all its members ; has reduced it to its proper order, and settled all its ordinances and privileges by his own authority ; and as he influences and governs it by his word and Spirit : The house or family of Christ, which I mean, and am speaking of as erected under the gospel-state, is no other than that of which we ourselves visibly, and really are, and shall prove to be living members, vitally united to him ; in case we be not prevailed upon by the persecutions, temptations, and dangers that surround us, to apostatize from Christ to *Moses* ; but carefully and strenuously retain, and persevere in a bold and open profession of his name on whom our hope is built ; and notwithstanding all the tribulations that befall us, continue on a principle of faith, to maintain our rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, with steadfastness to the end of our lives. (*chap. x. 23.*)

7 Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice,

7 To apply all this therefore for the caution of *nominal professors* against apostacy, and for the quickening of *real believers* to hold on, and hold out to the end, in their holy profession of Christ and his gospel ; let me remind you of what the Holy Ghost in the inspired writings of *David*, (*Ps. xc. 7, &c.*) says to the *Jews* of his day, who are set forth as examples to us, (*1 Cor. x. 6, 11.*) It is to this effect ; Now, immediately and without delay, while the present day of God's mercy and patience lasts, and the messengers of his grace are sent to you, if ye would attend to, regard and embrace what he says by them, for your own spiritual and eternal advantage ;

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness :

8 Take heed that ye do not wilfully shut your eyes against his light, or stop your ears against his voice, and resist his Spirit ; and so harden your hearts against his fear, and against all the methods of his wisdom and love for your present and future happiness, as the former generation of my professing people did, by their provoking unbelief, strifes, and murmurings against the Lord and his servant *Moses*, as particularly at *Midian* and

and *Meribah*, (Ex. xvii. 2,—7.) in the day of their tempting me by distrustful my power and goodness, after all my wonderful appearances for them; and in the day of my trying them by various dealings with them, while they were sojourning in the desert of *Arabia*:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

9 When on that, and several other occasions, your ancestors, according to the flesh, and in visible covenant-relation to me, called in question my providential and gracious presence with them, and care of them, saying in the language of unbelief, *Is the Lord amongst us, or not?* (Ex. xvii. 7.) And when, at another time, they demanded appearances of my favour on their behalf, beyond what they distrustfully imagined I either would, or could give them; saying, (*Pf. lxxviii. 19, 20.*) *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Can he provide flesh for his people?* They often put my faithfulness, power, and kindness to the trial, with an unworthy suspicious temper of mind, as though I would not be mindful of my promise, or were not able to perform it for their relief; no, nor to revenge the quarrel of my covenant upon refractory transgressors of it, tho' they had all along experimental proofs with the highest evidence to the contrary: And they went on in this manner to provoke me times and ways without number, even while they saw my marvellous works, both of judgment and mercy, forty years together, from the time of my bringing them with an out-stretched arm from *Egypt*, till the end of their journeyings through that barren wilderness, where they lived under my immediate protection and supplies, in their way to the land of *Canaan*.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.'

10 Therefore, to speak after the manner of men, who are troubled at disagreeable events, and particularly at things that reflect a dishonour upon themselves, and carry the marks of the basest ingratitude, I was all that while sorely displeased, offended, and at length, wearied out, with the repeated and aggravated incredulity and misbehaviour of the people of that age, even to the despising of my most merciful care and kindness, and reflecting on the honour of my name; and thereupon I said, in just resentment against them, 'They continually, on all occasions, go on in the perverse counsels and dispositions of their own hearts, running astray from me; and they have not attended to, and entertained due apprehensions of the ways of my providence, whether of judgment or mercy toward them, which they have seen in the course of my dispensations, (*ver. 9.*); nor did they

they approve of, and practically observe the ways of my precepts, even the ways of truth; holiness, and peace, which I set before them, and enjoined upon them, that they might walk therein.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

11 Upon the whole, my patience was so worn out by their incredulity and disobedience, that, in my righteous indignation, I swear by myself, (*Numb. xiv. 28,—30.*) and so declared with all the solemnity of an oath, which shews my word to be irreversible, that, for their high and numberless provocations obstinately persisted in, as surely as I live, the carcasses of that evil generation shall fall in the wilderness; and none of them from twenty years old and upwards, except *Galeb* and *Joshua*, men of a better spirit, shall enter into the land of *Canaan*, which I had promised to *Abraham* and his seed, as a land of quietness, peace, and plenty: a land in which the ark of the covenant should be fixed, as my resting place among them, (*Psa. cxxxii. 5, 8.*) and which was to be a type of my dwelling in my church, to give them a spiritual rest on earth, and afterwards in heaven, where they shall rest from all their labours, sins and sorrows, and enjoy the most complete and everlasting happiness in my immediate presence.

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

12 Being therefore warned by these awful examples,\* which are left for our admonition; and being excited by a consideration of the dignity of Christ's person and office, and of the near concern we have with him, and the rich advantages we may hope for from him, (*ver. 6.*) carefully see to it, (*SALVATI*) look about you, look upwards and inwards, my dear brethren in the profession, and, as I trust, in the saving benefits of the gospel: Be watchful with holy jealousy over yourselves, and with humble dependence on divine grace, lest at any time, (*PERICULI*) through the corruption of your own hearts, and the temptations of Satan and of this present world, unbelief; especially as proceeding from an habitually sinful temper of soul, wickedly prevail in any of you, which is in itself a most provoking evil, as it is a distrust of God, and gives him the lye, and so reflects the highest dishonour upon his authority, veracity, power, and grace, and is the root and beginning of, works and leads to, and unless subdued, will certainly

issue

#### N O T E.

\* Here the apostle pursues his exhortation which he was entering upon, *ver. 7.* and to prepare the way for the better enforcement of it, mentioned the case of the disobedient Israelites in the intermediate verses, which are to be considered as a parenthesis; and to

this verse stands in connection with the *wherefore* in *ver. 7.* but is now brought in with the greater advantage in his arguing from God's dispensations toward that unbelieving people, to his proceedings with the professors of Christ under the gospel state.

issue (as it did in your rebellious ancestors) in all backslidings, and apostacies from the only living and true God, who, inclusive of the Son, (*ver.* 4, 6.) as one God with the Father, has necessarily and essentially life in himself; and is the author of spiritual and eternal life to believers; and lives for ever to fulfil his promises to them, and his threatnings to those that wilfully depart from him. †

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day: lest any of you be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin.

13 But as a means of preventing this dreadful evil, be ye not only watchful over your own hearts, to guard against the first workings of unbelief and apostacy in yourselves; but shew a mutual tender concern for one another, by continually exciting and encouraging each other (*αλλ' ἑαυτοὺς νουθετεῖτε*) day by day and every day, as opportunities and occasions offer, to steadfastness in the faith, and to a holy circumspect care and caution, in dependence on divine grace, against carnality of mind, supineness and negligence; and against the temptations of Satan, the allurements and terrors of this world, and every thing that has a tendency to carry you off from Christ and the gospel: Attend to this as your present duty, while the day of life is continued, and the day of gospel-grace lasts, which will soon come to a period at death, and will do so, particularly to the Jews, at the approaching destruction of *Jerusalem*; let these Christian-offices of brotherly love and faithfulness be discharged to each other out of hand; lest any one of your number, that professes the same faith, and is partaker of the same external privileges of the gospel with yourselves, should be lulled asleep and stupified, and so led aside and seduced from Christ, through the guileful arts of indwelling sin, and the treachery with which it works in his heart, to magnify the terror of sufferings for Christ, and the pleasure of worldly ease, affluence, and safety; and to put a favourable construction and a fine gloss upon such evil ways of heart and life, as are destructive to his own soul.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

14 It is of the utmost consequence, for preserving us from this deceitfulness of sin and hardness of heart, to see to it that we are in truth what we profess to be: For it evidently appears, that (*μετὰ Χριστοῦ συνεσθώμεν*) we really have been brought into a happy partnership with Christ†, in his righteousness, Spirit, grace and benefits, as persons

#### N O T E.

† As the apostle here speaks, not of a future benefit, or of a promise for time to come, but of what was already actually enjoyed, the words, "if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end," seem

to be brought in, as a proof and evidence, and not as a condition of being made, or rather of "having been made," partakers of Christ. (See Dr Owen on the place.)

sons vitally united to him, and interested in all that he is and has, if we hold fast (*την ἀρχὴν τῆς προσηλύτου κατὰ χάριν*) our spiritual subsistence in him, and stedfastly maintain our holy confidence in our profession of him, which commenced upon our first believing; and persevere therein, against all opposition and danger, to the end of our lives.

13 While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

15 Take heed therefore to yourselves, and do all that is in you to fortify every one his brother against temptations to apostasy; and lay hold on the present time for it, (*ἐν τῷ ληρώσει*) in that, or for as much as, for preventing sloth, negligence, and delay, it is said by God himself, in the place but now quoted\* (*ver. 7, 8.*) To-day, while life and opportunity are continued, (it being absolutely uncertain whether a morrow will be afforded you or not,) if ye would believe and obey what he says unto you for your own good, take heed of contracting an insensibility and hardness of heart, that resists all kindly impressions, as your fathers did when they provoked the anger of the Lord against themselves, by their unbelief and rebellion in the wilderness.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

16 For some of them, † (to express it in the tenderest manner possible) when they had heard the voice of the Lord in the promulgation of the law at mount Sinai, ‡ and heard the instructions he gave them by the ministry of Moses, with regard to typical ordinances of worship, and the promised land of Canaan, which was a figure of heaven itself; they, instead of being suitably affected and influenced by it, were guilty of the highest provocations in the manner before mentioned (*ver. 9.*), however, all of them that were brought out of Egyptian bondage, did not go into those evil ways that were so extremely offensive to God: For Caleb and Joshua were men of a better spirit, and entered into the holy land. And so, blessed be God, it is

#### N O T E S.

\* The apostle here re-assumes the consideration of the case of the unbelieving Israelites, to enforce his argument.

† Nothing can be more like the spirit of the apostle Paul, than the almost inevitable prudence with which he prevents offence to the Jews, and all appearance of harshness, in representing so awful a case of their fathers: He speaks of only *some*, though it were in a manner *the whole body* of the Israelites, that provoked: and throws in this further mitigation, "howbeit not all," though there were only *two* exceptions, as to those that were twenty years old and upwards, when they came out of Egypt. (See Numb. xiv. 29, 30.)

‡ Though, perhaps, here may be a most immediate reference to God's speaking with

an audible voice by the ministry of angels, in the delivery of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai; yet I think what he said to Israel by his servant Moses, relating to the institutions of the ceremonial law, which was their gospel, and to the promise of Canaan, which was an eminent type of heaven itself, is to be included; because the apostle afterwards speaks of the gospels being preached to us as well as to them, (chap. iv. 2.); and the Jews themselves, as their writers tell us, accounted the land of Canaan to be a figure of the heavenly rest. (See Ainsworth on Gen. xii. 5.) and our apostle seems plainly to consider it under this notion, chap. xi. 2, 10, 14, 15, 16.)

is only *some*, and not *all* the *Jews*, that have rejected the gospel of salvation in these days, after they had heard it in the ministrations of Christ, and of his servants. (Chap. ii. 3.)

17 But with whom was his great forty years' wait? was it not with them that believed, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

17 But who were they of that former generation of the *Israelites*, with whom God was so highly offended for forty years together, as to exclude them from the land which he had promised to *Abraham* and to his seed? It certainly was not with all of them promiscuously without distinction. Was it not with them who had rebelled and murmured against him in the most notorious manner, and *that* repeatedly through unbelief? Yes, certainly it was with them, and them only, who, as a just punishment of their iniquities, were destroyed, and whose dead bodies lay slain by the righteous judgment of God, like miserable and detestable objects, in the howling desert, through which they were passing, before any of them reached the happy country to which they were bound.

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

18 And who were they among that people, against whom God was so greatly incensed, as to swear in his just and awful anger, that they should not be admitted to enjoy the privileges, peace, and blessings of that rest, which was to be possessed in *Canaan*, according to his appointment? It was not against the faithful among them; no, but only against those of them, who, notwithstanding all their professions and obligations, and all the wonderful appearances of God among them, rejected him by unbelief; as is plain from what he said, not only concerning them, But to them. (*Numb. xiv. 28, 29.*)

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

19 Upon the whole then, we plainly see, and should observe and consider it to humble and caution us, and to engage our constant dependance on divine grace for keeping us close to Christ, that they could not be admitted to set one foot on the holy land, in order to their enjoying its blessings, how desirous soever they were of it; because of their unbelief, which was the root and spring of all their other provocations, and forfeited all right and claim to the promise of entering into that rest, and so excluded them from it.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

With what incomparable dignity does our Lord Jesus Christ transcend *Moses*, in his person and office! *Moses* was merely a man, and a servant! and the best that can be said of him is, that he was a part of God's house, and faithful in his ministry: But Christ is more than a mere man or servant; he is the God that formed his church, and orders all its affairs; and is the Lord, proprietor, and ruler of it! and in all his ministrations is faithful to his Father that appointed him to his office, as a divine Mediator and Saviour. How worthy is he of our highest regard! All, that profess to be partakers of the heavenly calling, should think frequently

quently and honourably of him, as the great apostle and high priest of their profession, and hold fast the beginning of their confidence, and their rejoicing therein, to the end, as ever they would prove themselves to be true members of his family in which he dwells, and will be glorified here and for ever hereafter. How watchful should we be against the first workings of unbelief, and much more against the prevalence of it! This is a mother sin, that leads the way to all others: It proceeds from the corruption of the heart, and is in itself exceeding sinful: It is no less than a departure from the living God and Saviour, in whom is all our help, hope, and happiness. And, ah, how dreadful are the effects of apostasy! It is the highest provocation to God, and hardning of the heart against him. It is a shamefully distrustful tempting him; a grief to his good Spirit; and a contemptuous inobservance of all his dispensations of mercy and judgment; and brings the heaviest vengeance upon apostates themselves. How should the examples of others unbelief and rebellion against God, and of their punishment, be a solemn warning to us, that we may not trade in their steps; but may be excited to an obediential faith without delay, while the door of mercy is opened in the gospel! It is our greatest interest and duty to attend, and yield ourselves up, to what the Holy Ghost says in his word, and in secret suggestions to our souls; and not harden our hearts against it, lest God should, ere we are aware, swear in his wrath, that we shall never enter into the rest which he has provided for his people. But how great is the deceitfulness of sin to stupify the conscience! And what need have believers themselves to be daily cautioned, and to caution one another against it! No outward privileges or professions of religion will secure us from divine wrath, if our hearts are not right with God: But, blessed be his name, there are some of a more excellent spirit, like *Caleb* and *Joshua*, that shall enter into eternal rest. They are already partakers of Christ and of the benefits of his purchase, and shall for ever enjoy him in the glorious state of heavenly rest. But a perseverance in faith, and in a holy profession of it, is the best proof and evidence of its sincerity, and that this is our happy case. In vain do others pretend to it; but they that abide in Christ, as all true believers do, are kept by the power of God, through faith to compleat salvation.

## C H A P. IV.

*The apostle inculcates an humble cautious fear upon the Hebrews, lest any of them should come short of the promised rest through unbelief, 1, 2. Shows the much greater excellence of the heavenly rest, which is proposed in the gospel, than that of the earthly Canaan, which was set before the Israelites under the law, 3,—10. And concludes with the most awakening and encouraging arguments and motives to faith and hope in our approaches to God, 11,—16.*

### TEXT.

**L**ET us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

### PARAPHRASE.

**S**INCE God dealt so severely, in his righteous judgment, with his ancient people for their disobedience and unbelief, as has been observed, (*chap. iii. 7,—19.*) and since his dispensations toward them were designed as an admonition to us, we may justly expect to be dealt with in like manner, if we be guilty of the like sins, especially considering the richer advantages we now enjoy above what they had then: It therefore should be matter of deep concern with us, to maintain



an awful reverence of the greatness, holiness, and justice of God, and a religious dread of provoking him, not with a distrustful, dismaying and disheartning, but with a watchful and cautious fear, to put us upon a diligent use of all means, in an humble dependence on his grace, for our own and each others preservation from apostacy, and from the terrible consequences of it, that as God under the gospel-state has left on record, and proposed for our encouragement, a gracious promise of admittance to a state of peace and holy communion with him, through Christ, in truly evangelical worship and obedience in this world, and of a glorious rest and peace in the world to come; and as this, of all others, may be emphatically styled *God's rest*, not only as he is the author of it, but chiefly as he complacently rests in Christ the purchaser of it, and is well pleased with his people in him, and with the accomplishment of all the designs of his grace through him, and as it is the last and most perfect rest, that he will ever give them, and he himself is the sum of its felicity and glory; so the utmost care and caution ought to be used, lest any of you, through sloth and unbelief, in some season of temptation, should reject and forsake the promise, and so neglect the great salvation of the gospel, (*chap. ii. 3.*) and fall short of an enjoyment of it; or should even so much as appear, to yourselves or others, to lag in your Christian course, and to be so distanced in it, as not to reach its special blessings here, and the glorious inheritance of eternal life hereafter, as the *Israelites* fell short of the promised land, through their infidelity and disobedience.

3 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

2 For the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ has now been preached to us, who sit under the ministration of it, as it formerly was, for substance, tho' more obscurely, to our ancestors: But (*λογος τος ακους*) the good word, which was communicated to them in the ordinance of hearing, as God's appointed means of begetting faith, did not become effectual, and turn to any real advantage, as to many of those that heard it in the ministry of *Moses* and other inspired writers, that testified of Christ, (*John v. 39, 46.*) because they did not receive, appropriate, and apply it by faith to themselves; and so it was not united, and as it were incorporated with their hearts, as food is with the body, when it is eaten, and turned into suitable nourishment by a proper digestion of it: No more will the gospel of the grace of God, which is now more plainly preached to, and heard by us in the ministry of Christ's servants, be really and

eventually

eventually profitable to us; unless we receive and digest it by faith, as our spiritual food, and it become *an ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls*, (James, i. 21.)

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: Altho' the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

3 For as entering into any rest which God has proposed to his people, is only in a way of believing \*, so those of us, who, by a true and lively faith, have received and trusted in Christ, and in the promise of eternal life, as proposed to us in the gospel, do thereby already enter into a state of spiritual rest and peace, in communion with God through him, according to the light and grace of the New Testament-dispensation; and we, even now, enter by faith and hope in gospel-worship, into the heavenly rest within the vail, as a pledge and assurance to us of our personally entering hereafter into the full possession of it, *whither Jesus the forerunner is entered for us*, (chap. vi. 20.): And that such an excellent state of rest was designed of God for New Testament-believers, far exceeding that of the land of *Canaan*; as also that none but true believers shall enter into it, is evident, if we compare the several passages where the scripture speaks of *God's rest*, which he has gradually introduced in different ages of the world; as for instance, He said of the unbelieving refractory *Jews* in the wilderness, (Ps. xcvi. 11.) I, in my just and hot displeasure, have pronounced irreversibly, with all the solemnity of an oath, that, as surely as I live, I myself will cease to be God, if any of them shall have admission into my rest. This, by just construction,

#### N O T E.

\* The great design of the apostle in this and the following verses, down to the 10th, is to prove that there is a promise of rest peculiar to the gospel state, and to obviate an objection, as though what he had alleged and intited on, chap. iii. 7,—19, from Ps. xcvi. 11. to enforce his exhortation to the Hebrews, lest they should fall short of it, did not affect them; because God's rest spoken of there, or in any other part of the Old Testament, related only to the rest of the land of Canaan and the rest of the seventh-day sabbath, (ver. 4) which were now no longer master of *promise*, they having been already actually *enjoyed*. The apostle therefore shews in these verses, that it may be collected, even from what is said in that psalm itself, that there is, in reality, a promise of another rest of God, beside those; and so supports and strengthens his argument for taking heed, lest they should fall short of this most excellent rest. It is, I own, no easy

matter to set the several steps of his reasoning on this head in a clear and obvious light but it will be a great help to our understanding it, if we consider that he speaks of *three sorts* of God's rest; *one*, which commenced upon the finishing of the work of creation, ver. 3. 4. *another*, which was afterward proposed to Israel in the wilderness, as to be enjoyed in the land of Canaan, ver. 5. and a *third*, which, after both those rests, was to be enjoyed in the gospel-state and heavenly world, ver. 6.—11.: And by comparing what the scripture says of all these rests, it appears that there is still a better rest that remains for true believers, than either of the two first before-mentioned; and *that* is an eternal rest in heaven, inclusive of the spiritual and holy rest which they have in Christ by faith here, as the beginning and earnest, and as issuing in the possession, of glory hereafter.

struction, according to the rule of contraries, plainly implies a promise that sincere and faithful believers among them should enter into it, (*ver. 6.*); and supposes that The rest proposed to them was yet to be expected although there was a former rest of God, which was then subsisting, and commenced immediately upon his having, at the beginning of the world, perfected the work of creation in six days; and so there was a rest of God near three thousand years before that of the land of Canaan.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from his works.

4 For, with respect to that former sort of rest, he had spoke of the seventh day of the week, in a certain well-known passage of the Old Testament, after this manner, as it is recorded, (*Gen. ii. 2, 3.*) the whole of which (as ye who are so conversant with the scriptures may easily recollect) stands thus, *On the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made: And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made, and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made, that is, not as though he were weary, and needed rest for refreshment after labour, as men do: But as rest supposes, and refers to some preceding work; so God, having compleated his work of creation, ceased from doing any thing further of that kind, and expressed his great pleasure and satisfaction in what he had done; with regard to which it is said, that on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed, (Ex. xxxi. 17.) And, in token of this, he appointed that day to be observed and enjoyed by man after six days labour, as a sabbath of spiritual and holy, as well as of bodily rest, when he blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it, (Ex. xx. 11.) That therefore could not be the rest intended, when God swore that the obstinate and rebellious *Israelites* should not enter into it.*

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

5 And again, in the same place, (*Pf. xcvi. 11.*) he speaks of another rest besides, and after this, saying, Let me not live if they enter into my rest; which, as it refers to the *Jews* in the wilderness, to whom it was first spoken, is indeed to be understood of their entering into the land of Canaan at the end of their toilsome journeyings through that vast desert, in resemblance of God's having ceased from those extraordinary and wonderful operations of providence, whereby he supported and defended them, and drove out the former inhabitants of that country, and made way for his people to go into it and take possession of it: But as it refers to the people in *David's* own day, to whom these words

were spoken and applied, as recited in the *Psalms*, after they had been in actual possession of the land of *Canaan* about four hundred and fifty years, (*Acts* xiii. 20.); it must have a farther meaning, than barely that rest, which they then enjoyed there.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

6 Since therefore, as is strongly implied in the threatening against them that believed not, (*απολειπονται*) there is still left a promise of rest in the word of God, (*ver. 1.*) which true believers should certainly be partakers of, according to his design and appointment, as, in fact, the next generation of *Israelites* in the wilderness were of the promised land; and since (*οι προτεροι ευαγγελισθεντες*) the generality of those *Jews* to whom the good tidings of entering into that typical rest was first published in the wilderness, fell short of it, by means, and on account of their provoking unbelief, though others were afterwards brought to possess it.

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

7 For this reason, \* I say, God, after all this, again (*μητι*) prescribes and fixes by *David*, in the forementioned *Psalms*, a certain day or season then to come, in which those of that age were to seek an entrance into his rest, after they had been for so many years actually settled in the land of *Canaan*, according to what is there said, even then, by way of caution to them, If ye would hearken to the voice of God, relating to the time of this further promised rest, which ye ought to do now immediately without delay, lest ye never have an opportunity afterwards for it. Take heed that ye do not despise, and so harden your hearts against, his awful admonitions and gracious promises, with regard to this rest, as your fathers did in the wilderness, with regard to their rest in *Canaan*. This plainly shows, that what is their said related, not to the rest which was already enjoyed, but to one which was to be enjoyed after they were in full possession of the promised land.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

8 For if *Josbua*, whose name is called by the *Greeks*, *Jesus*, which signifies a *Saviour*, and who was a type of *Jesus Christ* as the great Captain of salvation, that conducts believers to their spiritual and eternal rest; If, I say, *Josbua*, the son of *Nun*, had given the *Israelites* possession

#### N O T E.

\* I take this verse to be brought in, as an argument to prove what had been said, *ver. 6.* about a promise being left of a rest yet to come, *ver. 1.* rather than as another argument, distinct from that, to prove the same point; and so he therefore, *ver. 6.* refers to the case of God's saying what is alledged in this verse, the first words of which I think

may be better read, *he again limiteth*, than *again he limiteth*, as though one argument was contained in *ver. 6.* and another was added in this, to prove the same thing; whereas, if it were so, they would probably have been connected by the copula *and* again, as is usual in such cases, and as we had it in *ver. 5.* (*και παλι*).

possession of the ultimate rest intended in the *Psalms* by his having brought them into, and settled them, so long before, in the land of *Canaan*, (*Josh. xii. 4.*); then, (*μὴν ἡμέρας*) after these things had been actually accomplished so many hundred years before, God would not still have spoke by *David* of another day or season, in which the people that then dwelt in possession of the promised land, were to seek after a further rest, which was typified by that, and could be no other than what was to be introduced by *Jesus, the Messiah* himself.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

9 Upon the whole then, since neither the rest of the *seventh-day sabbath*, nor of the land of *Canaan* were, or could be intended by that last mentioned day, which was spoken of after both those former rests were actually enjoyed, it is evident that there still remains under the gospel-state, a more complete and glorious rest, which was typified by, and is vastly preferable to those rests, and is to be inherited by the true people of God, inclusive of a *spiritual rest* by faith in *Christ*, and of the *sabbath* or day of holy and joyful rest, as a *New Testament-sabbath*, in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead; but principally and ultimately consisting of that *heavenly rest*, which these are foretastes and pledges of, and which, in virtue of what *Christ* has done and suffered, believers shall be admitted to, and continue with him in the full enjoyment of for ever.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

10 For our Lord, having gone through the great work of redemption in his obedience, sufferings, and death \*, rose again and took possession of heavenly glory; and so rested from all the labours, sufferings, and trials which before he underwent, in finishing the work that his father gave him to do, and in procuring a blessed rest for his

#### N O T E.

\* It is pretty remarkable, that, in the Greek, the apostle, ver. 9. changes the term, and uses another word (*καταπαύω*) which signifies a *sabbatism*, to express the rest that remains for the people of God, different from that, (*καταπαύω*) which he had all along used before, and returns to again, ver. 10. to express the rest of God and his people. The reason of this alteration, says the learned *Dr Owen*, and several other noted divines, is to include the day of *sabbatical rest* which God has appointed under the *gospel-state*, correspondent to what had been said, ver. 4. about the *seventh-day sabbath*; inasmuch that as that day of *sabbatical rest* was appointed immediately upon, and in commemoration of God's resting from the work of creation; so the *New Testament day of sabbatical rest*, or the first day of the week, was appointed immediately up-

on, and in commemoration of, *Christ's* resting from the work of redemption, when he rose from the dead, and entered into his rest, as having "ceased from his own former work, as God did from his." The reader may see these interpretations argued for at large in *Dr Owen* on these verses, and in his exertations on the sabbath; and argued against by *Mr Pierce* on this place. However, as, after all, there seem to be considerable difficulties attending each of these interpretations, and I cannot be positive whether a *Christian sabbath* be intended; or whether he "that has entered into his rest," refers to *Christ*, or to *believers*, I have thought proper to take in all these senses, which may be done without one's excluding the other; and so leave every reader to chuse that which he judges to be best.

his people, a pledge of which is given in the New Testament-sabbath : And every true believer that has entered by faith into the spiritual rest of the gospel-state, and of a holy sabbatism here upon earth, has done with all the works of iniquity ; so as to be no longer a lover, practiser, or willing servant of sin, as formerly he was ; and he has ceased from trusting or resting, as he used to do, in any of his own works of righteousness, though not ceased from *the practice* of them ; who having finished his course of obedience, trial, and conflict, in this life, and entered into a complete and glorious rest in the celestial state, he has not only ceased, and that entirely, from all the sins, but likewise from all the toils, persecutions, and sorrows of every kind, that attended him in this evil world, (*Rev. xiv. 13.*) : And both Christ himself, and every true believer in him, according to their respective conditions, have in this manner rested from their labours, in resemblance of what God did at the beginning of the world, who, when he had finished the work of creation, ceased from working after that sort any more.

† Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

II As therefore the sweetest rest comes after labour, and is greatly recommended and enhanced by it ; and as ye have heard what an excellent rest, superior to all others, is proposed to believers in the promises of the gospel ; let it †, answerable to the exhortations given, (*ver. 1.*) be our diligent care and study, and our earnest endeavour in the use of all appointed means, and in humble dependence on divine grace, to overcome all difficulties, and break through all oppositions and discouragements, from within and from without, that we may have access into all the privileges and blessings of the gospel-state here, which will be an unspeakable refreshment to our own souls, and give them the most composed and delightful rest in Christ, suitable to our circumstances here ; and that we may have a safe and triumphant arrival to the heavenly glory hereafter, where we shall rest from all our labours, sins, and sorrows, and enter into peace, and into the joy of our Lord, and be possessed of all possible blessedness with him for ever ; let us, I say, be deeply concerned at heart about this rest, each one for himself, and stir up one another to look out after it ; lest as the carnal *Israelites*, notwithstanding

#### N O T E.

† The apostle here returns to his exhortation, *ver. 1.* to take heed, lest any of them should fall short of the promised rest through unbelief ; and does this now with greater advantage, in consideration of the

proof he had given in the intermediate verses of the *certain and superior excellence* of that rest, which belongs to the gospel, above what was enjoyed in the land of Canaan.

standing their visible relation to God, and their having a promise of *Canaan* set before them, were so disheartened by real or imagined terrors, wants, and dangers, through the powerful workings of unbelief, as not to arrive at that promised rest; so any amongst us that hear the gospel, and are professors of faith in Christ, should, through slothfulness, fear, and unbelief, never attain to that spiritual rest which is begun in grace here to be perfected in glory hereafter; but should fail of entering into it, in like manner, and for the same cause, as they fell short of the earthly *Canaan*. Let their sin and punishment be an instruction and a cautionary example to us; lest we, being left to ourselves, plunge into *both*, as they did.

11 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

12 There is the greatest reason to maintain a godly jealousy over ourselves and over one another, lest this should be the awful case of any of us, that make a profession of Christ's name; and there is good encouragement for an exercise of the utmost care and caution herein: For our Lord Jesus Christ, who (as ye well know) bears the character of *the Word of God*, is *the living One*, (*John* i. 14.) and *the Prince of life*, (*Rev.* i. 18. and *Acts* iii. 15.) who has life in himself, and is the author of it to others, (*John* v. 25, 29.) \*, and the written word, even *the holy scripture*, which is the word of revelation, has a quickening virtue in it, as animated by

## N O T E.

\* By the word of God some here understand Christ the personal word of God, who was usually styled the Word; and the Word of God in the writings of the Jews, to whom this epistle was sent, and is often so called in the New Testament, as particularly in *John* i. 1, 14. and *Rev.* xix. 13. and he may probably be meant by the word of God's grace in *Acts* xx. 31. (See the note there.) But others understand the word of God here to signify the Holy Scripture, which is frequently mentioned under that title, as in *Luke* v. 1. and xi. 18. and *Acts* viii. 14. and xi. 1. and xiii. 7, 41, 46. All the properties ascribed to the word of God, in this and the next verse, evidently belong to our Lord Jesus Christ; and some of them seem to be so perfect, as most fitly to be applied to him, who, I think, is fairly to be understood as described, *ver.* 13. where it is said, in connection with this verse, "neither is there any creature, that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." And yet the properties of the word of God, in the verse before us, may, in some sense, be applied to the written word, as extended with his energy in the reading,

preaching, and hearing of it; and the connection with the preceding context seems to give countenance to this application of these passages: For Christ may be here considered as the author of, and as working by the word, to enforce the exhortation to take heed of rejecting it by unbelief. However, it is difficult to determine with certainty which of these is most precisely intended; the arguments for one and the other may be seen in various learned and critical commentators, such as Dr. Owen, who takes it to be meant of Christ; and Dr. Wist. and Mr. Pierce, who understand it of the written word. But as all that is here ascribed to the word of God, relates to what Christ does by means of the written word, and to what the written word cannot do, but as made efficacious for it by him, it amounts to much one and the same thing in the apostle's argument, whether we here consider Christ, or the Scripture, to be signified by the word of God; and therefore both senses are taken into the paraphrase, which may be done with the utmost consistency, while we consider one as the efficient cause, and the other as the instrument of the operations which are ascribed to it.

by his Spirit, *John* vi. 63.) to raise dead souls to spiritual life, and to make living souls lively : And Christ, the eternal Word, exerts a divine energy by means of the written word, as he makes it mightily impressive on the mind and conscience, to convince of sin, and subdue its power, and captivate every high thought to the obedience of Christ, (*2 Cor.* x. 4.) ; as also to strike terror into hypocritical souls, and to comfort the hearts of sincere believers : And his agency by his word, which is the sword of the Spirit, and like a sharp two-edged sword that proceeds out of his mouth, (*Ephes.* vi. 17. and *Rev.* i. 16.) is more cutting and penetrating into the inmost recesses of the heart, than the sharpest sword can be, when thrust into the body ; its mighty strength, in the hand of Christ, makes its way to the inmost parts of a man, reaching unto (*διερχόμενος*) the animal or sensitive, and the intellectual soul, (see the note on *1 Thess.* v. 23.) ; and even dividing between them, so as either to reduce them to a holy order in sanctifying both, and keeping them in their distinct and proper places, with a due subordination of the affections and passions to the understanding in true believers ; or to procure death and ruin in executing judgments upon false professors, by the power of Christ according to his word : And the eternal Son of God, by his word, and his Spirit accompanying it, instantly pierces, in a way of mercy, or of judgment, the most hidden parts, as the joints and marrow of the human body, that lye out of view, are reached by a sharp sword, that strikes home, and gives the deepest wound : The eternal Word also, by his omnipresence, searches, knows, and judges of the regular, or sinful thoughts and principles, motives, purposes and ends, that work in every one's heart, (*Rev.* ii. 23.) as well as the outward acts of his life ; and his written word in the ministrations of it, as rendered powerful by him, discovers a man's whole soul to himself ; and tells him all that is in his heart, either to humble or comfort him, or to condemn or acquit him, according to the real state and condition in which he stands before God, as a hypocrite, or true believer.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifested in his sight :

13 Nor is it possible for any of us to escape Christ's most critical notice, or to be out of the reach of his powerful operations, one way or another, upon our minds and consciences by his word \* ; there being no creature,

#### N O T E.

\* In his sight, undoubtedly relates, not to the written word, but either to God or Christ ; for his sight is a personal character,

as appears from the expression itself, and from what follows in immediate connection with it ; and it seems to me, that we are to understand



light: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

creature, of what rank or kind soever, that lyes conceal'd from his all-comprehensive view; *who knows all things*, (John xxi. 17.) and *who searches the reins and the heart*, and *will give unto every one according to his works*, (Rev. ii. 23.) None of them are in the least conceal'd from him; but, whatever we may think of it, or whatever attempts we may make to hide ourselves from him, all persons and things, even the most secret thoughts and desires, hopes and fears, tempers and dispositions of all our hearts, lye open to his accurate inspection, like things that are quite naked and expos'd to his eyes, which, for their piercing light and lustre, are as a flame of fire, (Rev. i. 14.)† And as the beasts for sacrifice were slay'd, and cut, and laid open, that the priest might narrowly examine, and see whether there were any faults or imperfections in the carcase or its intrails, that would render it unfit to be offer'd; so all things in, and about us, are most evidently expos'd, and clearly manifest'd, to his critical all-seeing eye, with whom we have the nearest and most important concerns, and have more to do than with all this world; to whom also we must one day give an exact account of all things done in the body, whether they be good or bad, (2 Cor. v. 10.) and who is the principal subject of our discourse in this epistle. These are awful and affecting thoughts, to engage our utmost circumspection and care, lest any of us fall thort of the heavenly rest thro' unbelief.

14 Seeing then that we have a great

14 But, to return to what has been said about *the priest-hood* of Christ, whom we have call'd *the High Priest*

#### N O T E.

understand it as meant more directly of Christ, than of God the Father, though not exclusive of him: For it was not *God himself*, but the *word of God*, that was the subject all along spoken of in the preceding verse, as working in such a lively, powerful, and piercing manner; and here, in confirmation of it, and in close and natural connection with it, he, who is there call'd *the word of God*, is represented as *Transfient* and *Judge of all*, and therefore undoubtedly capable of exerting all those operations, either in a way of judgment or of mercy: and the last clause of this verse seems to direct our thoughts to him, as it is he with whom we have most immediately to do, for being call'd or acquitted in judgment; Since the Father judgeth no man *immediately* and *personally*, but hath committed all judgment to the Son: Or, as the word (*λογος*) here rendered *have to do*, signifies also *an account*, as it is translated in many places, particularly Mat. xii. 36. and xviii. 23. Luke xvi. 2. Rom. xiv. 12. Phil. iv. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. and 1 Pet. iv. 5.

and at other times it signifies *speech* or *discourse*, and is so rendered John viii. 43. Acts xx. 7. and 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4. and in almost numberless other places: so the passages before us (*προς εν ημιν ο λογος*) might be translated, "to whom we must give an account," as the great Judge of all; or, "concerning whom we speak;" (*προς προς*) compare the Greek in chap. i. 7. and v. 11. all which entirely agrees to our Lord Christ, and points us to him.

† Several critics have observed, that the words (*γυμνα και τετραχλισμενα*) here rendered *naked and opened*, allude to the sacrifices under the law, whose carcasses were slay'd, and hung up naked, to be seen without their skin, and were afterwards laid on their backs, cut open, and cleav'd asunder through the neck and back-bone; and so every thing, within and without, was expos'd to open view, to be examined with the greatest exactness, for discovering whether there were any blemish or defect in it, or not.

great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

*Priest of our profession*, (chap. iii. 1. see the note there,) We have such a superlative High Priest as, having made atonement for sin by his own blood, is gone into a more glorious and eminent place of God's special residence, than any high priest of old was admitted to in the execution of his office: He is ascended and gone through the aerial \*, far above all visible heavens, (*Ephes. iv. 10.*) even to the heaven of heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us, (*chap. ix. 24.*); and so he is the great antitype of the priests under the law, who passed through the second vail of the tabernacle and temple, with the blood of sacrifices, into the holy of holies. The great and glorious High Priest I mean, is no less a person than that Jesus, who in his divine nature is by way of peculiarity and eminence the Son of God: We having then such a matchless High Priest, so incomprehensibly great, divine, and excellent, so thoroughly qualified for, and exalted in his office, the most difficult and fundamental part of which he has already performed on earth, and the remainder of which he is now executing in heaven; Let us be hereby encouraged, in the exercise of faith, love, and holy obedience, to maintain a free and open confession of him, and professed subjection to him, as our only Lord and Saviour, with steadfastness, diligence, and perseverance therein unto the end. And we may depend on seasonable aids and assistances from him to enable us hereunto.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

15 For this great High Priest is as *willing* as he is *able* to compassionate and relieve us under all our trials and difficulties. Though he is gone to heaven, he is not unmindful of us who are his members upon earth, nor has he laid down his office; but we have him still officiating for us: Nor have we a high priest that is insensible of our wants and weaknesses, miseries and dangers, as if he could not be tenderly, though not grievously, impressed with them; or could not be excited by truly human affections, as far as is consistent with, and suitable to his present state of exaltation, to pity and succour us in the most effectual manner under them, and in due time to deliver us from them: But

25,

## N O T E.

\* *Passed into the heavens* (*εἰσῆλθοντες εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς*) properly signifies *passed through the heavens*, and manifestly alludes to the high priest's entering through the second vail into the holy of holies, with the blood of the sacrifices, on the great day of atonement once a-year, an account of which we have at large, Lev. xvi. and which was typical of

our great High-Priest's more glorious entrance, once for all, through the visible heavens, with the virtue of his own blood, into the most holy place, even into the immediate presence of God in the heaven of heavens, as is evidently represented in this epistle, and particularly chap. ix. 7.—12.

as, while he was here in the flesh, he himself suffered by hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, and other natural infirmities of mankind, and by all manner of temptations and persecutions, and inward and outward afflictions and trials, just of the same kind, and in the same manner, as we ourselves now are liable to them; so he experimentally knows what we undergo in our griefs and sorrows; and, remembering his own sufferings, sympathizes with us under ours, as we are *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, (Eph. v. 30.) And yet (which is more than can be said of any of us, or any former high-priest,) he bore and went through his own troubles without ever having misbehaved, or committed the least sin, though he was tempted to it; and so he is not only the fitter to be a complete example to us in all that we endure, and to fortify us against all sinful thoughts, words or ways under, and by means of our temptations; but is also the fitter to take away the iniquity that we may fall into by them, since he, having gone through them in such a perfectly holy manner, *needed not, as the high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's*; but all the virtue of his sacrifice was entirely and alone for our sins, which he expiated, once for all, when he offered up himself. (Chap. vii. 27.)

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

16 Let us therefore, in consideration of his most excellent priesthood, which, in consequence of what he had done in a way of atonement on earth, he is carrying on in his intercession for us in heaven, be encouraged to draw near to God\* (*προσέγγιζοντες*) by faith in prayer, and in every other ordinance of gospel-worship, as he is seated not on a throne of justice to execute deserved vengeance upon us; but on a throne of free and condescending grace, to commune with us, and to bless us; which was typified by the mercy-seat under the law, where God dwelt between the cherubim in visible appearances of glory, (Ps. lxxx. 1.) and gave forth his orders to the children of Israel, (Ex. xxv. 22.) While therefore

#### N O T E.

\* The throne of grace signifies, not the throne of Christ, as some would suppose; but the throne of God the Father: For Christ is here all along spoken of as our great High Priest, who appears before God the Father on our behalf, to act for us toward him, and to encourage our coming to the throne of grace. Accordingly it is said, that Christ "is entered into heaven itself,

"now to appear in the presence of God for us," (chap. ix. 24.); and he is considered in our context, not as the object on the throne, but as the medium of our coming to the throne, as "through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father," Ephes. ii. 18. (See Dr Owen and Mr Pictet on the place.)

therefore we think of him, as a sovereign on a throne †, that we may approach him with awful reverence and godly fear, in consideration of the infinite distance there is between him and us, Let us, at the same time, realize him as on a throne of grace, to embolden a cheerful freedom of access to him by faith, with holy liberty, and humble confidence in him, as our reconciled God and Father, that we receive (*παλαθωμεν*) all the mercy, for which that throne is prepared, and from which it is dispensed in the forgiveness of sins, and in compassionate relief under all our straits and miseries; and may find favour in God's sight through his Son, together with all the gracious assistances and supplies, in answer to our seeking them, that we need to succour, support and comfort us, and to perform all things for us, in the most seasonable manner, and at the most seasonable times, in all our wants, distresses, and difficulties of every kind, and particularly in every extraordinary trouble, temptation, and danger, that now attend, or ever may befall us all our lives long, till we get to heaven.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How ancient is the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ! It has been all along the same, for substance, under various dispensations and different degrees of light, from the fall of *Adam* to New Testament-times: The promise of evangelical and eternal rest, is now set before us with the clearest evidence in the preaching of the gospel: but our hearing it will be of no saving advantage to us, unless it be mixed with faith. How should we therefore dread the thought of taking up with anything short of an effectual faith, to receive and digest what we hear, lest God should swear in his wrath against us, as he did against the unbelieving *Israelites*, that we shall never enter into his rest! But true believers do, and shall enter into a better rest, than that of the land of *Canaan*; a spiritual rest in this world, and an everlasting rest in heaven, which is a delightful and holy sabbatism founded on Christ's resting from his mediatorial labours and sufferings on earth, when he had finished the work of *redemption*, as the seventh-day sabbath was founded upon God's having ceased from his *creating* work, when he had finished it. —How efficacious is the written word of God in the hand of Christ, the living and life-giving Word! He sets it home with power and penetration upon the heart, and gives the soul a plain view of itself, either for its reformation and comfort, or its condemnation and confusion. How awful, adoring, and endearing should our thoughts of Christ be! All things are continually and exactly open to his all-seeing eye: As he is God the Word, he narrowly inspects and observes the most secret dispositions and designs of our hearts; and we have the most important of all concerns to transact with him, and must give an account of all that we think, say,

#### N O T E.

† God's exercising *mercy and grace* in Christ may be considered as his being seated on a throne, because he therein appears with majesty, royalty, and glory; and on a throne of grace, because grace erected it, and reigns there, and dispenses all blessings from thence, in a way of mere unmerited favour,

to the praise of its own glory; and it is a throne of grace founded on the "mediation of Christ, as he is set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. and appears there as a righteous advocate for us, in the virtue of his propitiation, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

say, or do, to him as our Judge at the great day. O solemn considerations! But how sweetly are they tempered by believing views of him as the Son of God, our great atoning and interceding High Priest and almighty Saviour? He has been exercised in our nature and world with the very same sort of temptations, inward and outward, as we ourselves are; and he, still remembering what he suffered by them without sin, compassionates us under ours, though, alas! attended with sin! and is gone into the heaven of heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us. What an encouragement is this to hold fast our faith in him, and steadfastly abide by our holy profession of his name; and to come with humble boldness and holy freedom of spirit to God, through him, as on a throne of grace, at all times, and especially in the worst of trials, fears, and dangers, for all the seasonable mercy and grace we stand in need of, to forgive our sins, and relieve us under all our troubles!

## C H A P. V.

*The apostle sets forth the office and duty of a high priest, 1,—4. Shews how abundantly this is answered in Christ's super-eminent call to, and discharge of that office, 5,—10. And reproveth the Christian Hebrews for their slothfulness and little progress in the knowledge of the truths of the gospel that were prefigured by the law, 11,—14.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

FOR every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

WE may comfortable hope for all seasonable mercy and help in our applications to a throne of grace, while we think of Jesus the Son of God, as appearing there in the character of our great and sympathizing High Priest to introduce us to it; and we may be sure of his compassion towards us in the execution of his office on our behalf: For even under the legal dispensation, which was typical of the gospel-state, every high priest was singled out, sanctified and set apart to his office, from among the children of *Israel*, (Ex. xxviii. 1. as one partaker of the same human nature with them, that he might be a proper High Priest for *men*, as he was appointed and constituted to represent and transact for *men*, and might in their name and stead, and for their benefit, present all kind of legal offerings to God for appeasing him on account of their sins, whether they were free-will offerings, or such as were statedly fixed and determined by the law, or whether they were offerings of animate or inanimate things by way of sacrifice; And so he typified Christ our great High Priest, who took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and was in all things made like unto his brethren, that, by a more excellent and truly atoning sacrifice of himself, he might make reconciliation for the sins of his people, (chap. ii. 16, 17.) and that their persons and prayers might be accepted of God, as presented by, and through him.

1 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity :

2 Every legal high priest is, or ought to be one, who can (*μετὶ σπουδῆς*) reasonably bear with, and tenderly pity and condescend to, the frailties and weaknesses of the people for whom he officiates, that he may offer sacrifices for their sins of ignorance, and may sympathize with, and not be incensed against them, on account of their errors of various kinds, whereby they have strayed from the way of God's commandments into the ways of sin, and from the way of safety or relief into the way of misery and danger ; and so are out of the way of truth and holiness, comfort, and happiness : He is qualified for exercising all compassion toward them ; because even he himself, (*καὶ καὶ αὐτὸς*) as a man and a sinner, is also attended with the like moral, as well as natural infirmities that they labour under. And the forbearance and compassion of Jesus, our great High Priest, towards ignorant souls and sinners that are gone astray, like lost sheep, is incomparably more excellent and effectual ; because he himself has been surrounded with all natural human weaknesses, temptations, and afflictions, tho' without sin. (*Chap. iv. 15.*)

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

3 And by reason of the sinful, as well as natural infirmities, that always beset or encompassed the legal high priest, it was incumbent upon him, in the discharge of his function, to offer up propitiatory sacrifices, not only for the sins of the people whom he represented, but likewise for his own personal sins, (*Lev. iv. 3. and ix. 7. and xvi. 6.*) he as much as they needing an atonement, while they were all in common sinners against God : But herein our blessed Lord has infinitely the preference to any former high priest, since he being sinless had no occasion to offer any sacrifice for himself, but only for his people, that the whole virtue of it might be placed to their account, and that he might the more feelingly pity them under all their troubles on account of their sins, as remembering what he suffered in making an expiation for them.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron :

4 And it was further necessary, according to the law, that no man whatsoever should of his own head intrude into, or assume to himself the high honour and dignity of the priesthood, for attempting which, *Uzziah*, tho' a king, was severely rebuked and punished, (*2 Chron. xxvi. 16.*) But he only was to be advanced to that sacred office, whom God called and authorised, by special order and immediate appointment, to be invested with, and to execute it, as he did *Aaron* and his sons at the first setting up of the Levitical priesthood. (*Ex. xxviii. 1. and 1 Chron. xxiii. 15.*)

5 So also, Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee:

5 So, in like manner, our Lord Jesus, the anointed Saviour, did not in his incarnate state raise himself up, by any private act of his own, to the honour of the gospel high priesthood, any more than Aaron did to that which he was advanced to; but he was eternally appointed, and in due time solemnly called to, qualified for, and actually invested with this glorious office, which was an honour conferred upon him, as man, (see the note on ver. 8.) by the immediate designation of God the Father himself, who, as is testified (*Pf. ii. 7.*) said to him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; by which he intimated \* both the dignity of his person as his eternal Son, and the excellency and authority of his priestly office, as both should be demonstrated and owned of God the Father by his resurrection from the dead, in consequence of his having fully satisfied divine justice by that one offering of himself in his death, *whereby he perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* (Chap. x. 14.)

6 And we have a still more express testimony to Christ's priesthood in *Pf. cx. 4.* where God the Father said to his Son, Thou art and shalt be an eternal High Priest, not after the order of Aaron, whose priesthood ran in a continual line of succession, from age to age, in his family; but after the superior order of the renowned Melchisedec, (see the notes on ver. 10.) who had no predecessor or successor in his office, which was confined to himself alone; and so was the more eminent and lively type of the priesthood of Christ, as that was to abide in his own person alone and for ever, without any one's preceding, or following him, or sharing with him, in the dignity and work of his priesthood; but was to manage all the high affairs and concerns of it wholly and alone by himself.

7 Who while he was here upon earth, clothed with flesh

6 As he saith also in another place, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec':

7 Who in the days

#### N O T E.

\* To suppose, with some, that the passage here quoted from *Psal. ii. 7.* "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee," refers, not to the divine nature, but merely to the priestly office of Christ, seems utterly inconsistent with ver. 8. where it is said, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." And though Christ's priesthood, as well as Sonship, was solemnly declared by his resurrection from the dead, I can by no means think, with others, that he was not an High Priest, or did not perform any part of his priestly office upon earth; or that it commenced after his resurrection and ascension to

heaven: For offering sacrifice was a principal part of the priest's office; and Christ's death is frequently spoken of throughout this epistle as a sacrifice, which necessarily supposes him to be a PRIEST before he offered it; since all the typical priests were actually invested in their office before they could offer any sacrifice under the law; and this we are told our Lord did, when "thro' the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God; and once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and so was offered to bear the sins of many," (chap. ix. 14, 26, 28.)

days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared.

flesh and blood, and all the sinless frailties and infirmities of human nature, and liable to all sorts of calamities; and who, in the sufferings he endured under a sense of divine wrath, which he was to bear for our sins in the discharge of his priestly office, was *fore amazed, and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, when, together with the offering of himself, he presented his earnest addresses in the most fervent, humble, and pathetic manner, yea, even with a loud cry, and weeping petitions and intreaties unto God his Father, who (if he pleased) could have delivered him from the terrors of the death which lay before him. (See *Mark* xiv, 33,—36. and xv. 34.) And he was heard, so as to be accepted in his prayer; and was answered, tho' not by a prevention of his sufferings and death themselves, (which he knew would be so extremely agonizing that human nature, as such, could not but be surely afraid of them) yet as to the main intention of his importunate prayer, in the seasonable assistances that were afforded him in the composition of his human passions; in his resurrection, and victory over death; and in his obtaining all the desired ends of his sufferings, for the glory of God and the redemption of the church: And he was thus heard, because of his holy reverence (*τοῦ* *θεοῦ*) of his heavenly Father.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered:

8 Though he was the eternal Son of God, the same in nature and perfections with the Father, and infinitely dear to him \*, who called him to be an High Priest; yet having assumed human nature, that he might therein execute his priestly office, as his Father's Servant, such was his zeal for glorifying him, and his love to the church, that he submitted, with an exercise of faith, patience, self-denial, resignation, and all humility and readiness of mind and heart, practically to learn what it is to be obedient, and how good it is to be so, to his Father's will and command, even unto the death of the cross, (*John* x. 18. and *Phil.* ii. 7, 8.); yea, he condescended to learn, by severe experience, what terrible difficulties and distresses, and yet what rich advantages, attended his obedience all his life long, and especially when he came to die, by his enduring all those things, which he was called to suffer in making atonement for

#### N O T E.

\* This passage, as appears to me, stands in a beautiful opposition to *ver.* 5. There, considering Christ as *man*, his priestly office is spoken of as an *honour* conferred upon him; but *here*, considering him as *the Son*

of God, it is rather spoken of as a *condescension* in him to engage in it, and go through the services and sufferings he was called to thereby.



sin: He also hereby experimentally learned the trials, and difficulties of the obedience, which his people are called to; that he might the better sympathize with, and succour them. (*Chap. iv. 15.*)

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

9 And, having completed his obedience and sufferings unto death, and being thereupon fully consecrated to the whole of his priesthood for making intercession, in virtue of his sacrifice, (*chap. ii. 10.* see the notes there, and on *John xvii. 17.*) he became the procuring and efficient cause (*αἰτία*) of salvation, as he purchased it by his blood, in the virtue of which he secures it by his advocacy, and actually gives it by his spirit and grace: And the salvation which he is the author of, is not such a temporal deliverance from evil, as *Israel* had out of *Egypt*, or as the people of the *Jews* had from temporal punishments by their legal offerings, or as many believers shall have from the common destruction that is coming upon *Jerusalem*; but a salvation of an infinitely more excellent and durable nature, even a spiritual, complete, and everlasting salvation, inclusive of a deliverance from all evil, and of all the blessings of grace and glory, to all and every one of them, and of them only, that diligently hearken, and yield themselves up to him, as the Captain of their salvation, (*chap. ii. 10.*) for all holiness, as well as happiness, by the obedience of faith. (*Rom. xvi. 26.*)

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

10 Even to him who is named of God in an extraordinary manner, \* as he styled him an High Priest, not after the common way and course of *Aaron* and his sons, according to the law, in which there was a succession of priests of the same order; but according to the more eminent manner, in which † *Melchisedec* was called the priest

#### N O T E.

\* Here the apostle refers to what he had said, *ver. 6.* about Christ's being "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;" but expresses his being called of God by a very different word in the Greek, (*καταρτισμένος*) from that which is also rendered called (*καταρτισμένος*) of God, as was *Aaron*; (*ver. 4.*) There it relates to his being invested with his office; but here it relates to the denominations which God gave him as so invested, namely, that of an "high priest after the order of Melchisedec."

† Who this *Melchisedec* was must needs be very uncertain, since the Holy Ghost himself seems to have concealed it on purpose, that he might be a more eminent type of Christ, as he was some unknown king and priest of *Salem* or *Jerusalem*, who appeared in a superior character to *Abraham*, *Gen. xiv. 18.*—*20.* And though our apostle says in

the next verse, that "he had many things to say of him, and hard to be uttered, and goes largely into the consideration of him, *ch. vii.* yet he nowhere tells us who he was, which we may reasonably suppose he would have done, had God revealed it to him; and if he did not know this, it is too curious and vain for us to pretend to determine it: And therefore I rather choose to leave the matter, as designed to be concealed from us, than to offer conjectures about it, as some have done, who, on one other guesses, incline to think that it was the Son of God himself, while to others it appears very improbable that he should be a type of himself, who is spoken of as "another Priest after the order of Melchisedec," and after "the similitude of Melchisedec," (*chap. vii. 11, 15.*) which naturally supposes them to be different persons,

priest of the most high God; there being the greatest resemblance between the priesthood of that extraordinary man and of our Lord Jesus, as may be shewn hereafter. (*Chap. vii.*)

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered; seeing ye are dull of hearing.

11 Concerning which *Melchisedec*\*, as he was a type of Christ in his *kingly*, and especially in his *priestly* office, we, Christ's ministering servants, have many important things to deliver; things which are difficult to be explained, so as to convey familiar and exact ideas of them to your minds, and are *hard to be understood by you*, (*doxologia 2 Pet. iii. 16.*) not merely from the sublimity of the subject, or from my manner of representing it, but chiefly from your own indisposition to receive it; because many of you, at least, who have been too apt to stick to the letter of the law, and are too slothful (*νολητοι*) to inquire carefully into the gospel-revelation, are very backward to attend to, and receive what I have to offer about it.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

12 For when, considering your long standing in Christ's school, and the clearness of the gospel-revelation, and the advantages for instruction which have often been afforded you, (*chap. ii. 1,—3. and vi. 7.*) ye ought to have made such proficiency in the knowledge of Christ, as to be yourselves capable of, and to have engaged, some in privately, and some in publicly instructing others about the great doctrines of the gospel; ye, on the other hand, have made such little progress in knowledge, that, instead of being teachers of others, ye stand in need of one to instruct you over again into the nature of the very first rudiments, grounds, and principles of the Christian faith, that were shadowed out in the sacred writings of the *Old Testament*, and are more clearly revealed in the *New*, both of which, being delivered under divine inspiration, are to be esteemed (what they are in truth) the infallible dictates or sayings of God himself: And so exceedingly dull of hearing are some of you, as to have rather *declined*, than *grown* in the knowledge of spiritual things; inso-much that ye appear to be so weak and low in your *relish* and conceptions of them, as to need to be led into those plainest and most familiar articles of Christianity, which

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle defers his designed discourse about Melchisedec as a type of Christ to chap. vii. that he might take an occasion from this hint, to deal closely with the Hebrews in a needful and important digression in the remaining verses of this chapter, and to the end of the sixth, about their stupidity

and inattention, and consequently their small proficiency in the knowledge of such things as they might reasonably have been expected to have attained to in a greater degree than they had, considering the length of their standing in Christianity, and the light which was cast by the gospel on Jewish ordinances.

which (to borrow an allusion to corporal things) may be compared to milk, that is of easy digestion; instead of being taught the higher truths of the gospel, in the accomplishment of ancient types of the person and offices of Christ, which may be compared to such strong meat as is of harder digestion.

13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

13 For every one, whose spiritual constitution and attainments are so weak and child-like, that he has no appetite for, nor can take in and digest, any thing but the very first principles of the doctrine of Christ, (*chap. vi. 1.*) which are like milk for babes; whatever general notions he may have, he is like an unexperienced person, (*αἰματός*) and is inexpert at understanding, receiving, and improving the great truths of the gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, (*Rom. i. 17.*) and Christ is said to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, (*Rom. x. 4.*); and in which we are taught to live in the practice of righteousness, (*Tit. ii. 11, 12.*); for he that can only entertain, and profit by the easiest and most familiar principles of Christian religion, appears to be no better than a babe in his knowledge and improvement of the gospel.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

14 But the sublimer doctrines, which may be compared to strong meat, are most fit and proper for, and suited to the nourishment of those believers, who, like men grown up to maturity, are far advanced in the knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, (see the note on *1 Cor. ii. 6.*); and so, compared with babes, may be stiled perfect; (*τελειοί*) even such as by means of an experimental acquaintance with these divine things, according to the gospel-discovery of them, and by long custom and habits of conversing with them, which they have attained, under divine influence, by reading, hearing, meditation, and prayer, have their spiritual senses understandingly and feelingly employed and improved, to discern and distinguish between what is good or bad, true or false, pernicious or beneficial, detracting from, or perfective of, the gospel scheme; and know how to refuse the one, and embrace the other.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

Behold the incomparable excellence and affecting endearments of Christ's priesthood! He, being as truly man, as God, has a more tender and effectual compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, than any of the ancient priests could have, who were beset with the same *sinful*, as well as *natural* infirmities, with them; and therefore were obliged to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the people: But as our *sinless* High Priest suffered in the days of his humiliation, to the greatest extremity, for the sins of his people, he cannot but sympathize with them. With what fervency did he, in the most religious and submissive manner

apply to his heavenly Father for seasonable relief against those troubles that could not but be very terrible to human nature; and how fully was he answered, with respect to the grand design of his prayer! As he was perfectly fitted by his sufferings for completing his priestly office, he is become the author of eternal salvation to all that yield themselves up by faith and holy obedience to him. How great is the *honour* that was put upon him, as *man*; and his own *condescension*, as *God*, in bearing this important office! He did not thrust himself into it; but it was conferred upon him by the express and immediate call of God his Father, as the Levitical priesthood was upon *Aaron*; and it is manifest what a divine and glorious High priest he is, in that his Father said to him, *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee, and thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*. Though he was the eternal Son of God, yet, adorable condescension! how freely did he accept the call to office-work, and experimentally learn obedience by his sufferings unto death! But, alas, how often are professing believers themselves too little apprehensive of the glories of Christ, as shadowed out by *Melchisedec* in various instances, and of the doctrine of righteousness through him! They are apt to be so slothful and inattentive to them, that they cannot take in just sentiments of them; but when for their standing and advantages in the church, they might reasonably be expected to have such a stock of scriptural knowledge, as to be able to instruct others, they themselves need to be taught over again the very first principles of Christianity. But, blessed be God, there are provisions of all sorts in his word for every state and condition of his people; there is milk for babes, and strong meat for those that are arrived at a state of manhood in Christ, and are more skilful in the word of righteousness, as by means of frequent use, and great experience, they are confirmed in habits of knowledge and grace, and have their spiritual senses exercised to discern the difference between what is good and bad, and to relish the one and refuse the other. How should this consideration excite us to the greatest diligence, that we may not always belike children in understanding; but may live upon such sublime truths of the gospel as are suited to the nourishment of strong men in Christ!

## C H A P. VI.

*The apostle intimates his design of giving the Hebrews higher instructions, and excites them to a greater proficiency, than they had yet made in the doctrine of Christ, 1, 2. To enforce this upon them, he describes the dreadful nature and consequence of apostacy in the most moving strains, 4,—8. Sweetly insinuates his great satisfaction, as to the better part of them, notwithstanding what he had been saying about apostates, 9, 10. And encourages them to perseverance in faith and holiness, from the experience of other sincere believers, and from the promise and oath of God to Abraham, and to all the heirs of salvation, 11,—20.*

### TEXT.

Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and

### PARAPHRASE.

**SINCE** it is unworthy the character of Christians to be always children, instead of men in understanding, (*chap. v. 11,—14.*) let us therefore dismiss, for the present, what relates to the first principles of Christianity, without insisting particularly upon them, which, how important soever they be, are like milk for babes, (*chap. v. 12, 13.*) and let us proceed to discourse of, and to embrace with holy care and diligence, those great mysteries

of faith towards  
God.

mysteries of the gospel, that may bring us to more advanced degrees of spiritual understanding, such as are like *strong meat, fit for those that are of full age*, (chap. v. 14.) and, comparatively speaking, may be called a perfection in the knowledge of the sublimer points of faith, relating to the person and offices, and particularly to the *priesthood* of Christ, *'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, and unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, (Ephes. iv. 13.) I therefore decline insisting on *first principles*, that we who preach, and ye who hear, may not always be laying the foundation, and stop there, without building upon it: The *principles* I mean are such as these: One is the doctrine of *evangelical repentance*, which consists in a thorough sense of the evil of sin, as committed against God; in deep humiliation and grief of soul for it, and utter detestation of it; and, under apprehensions of the mercy of God through Christ, in turning to him from all iniquities, which may be called dead works, as they are practised by those that are dead in trespasses and sins, and as they deserve

## N O T E.

\* It is extremely difficult, and expeditors are much at a loss, to determine the sense of this and the following articles, to the end of the second verse, which are here called "the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and the foundation of repentance," &c. Some understand them to mean the *first principles of Christianity*; and others, the principles of *Judaism*, as contained in the doctrine of the Old Testament, and particularly of the ceremonial law, which gave a shadowy representation of Christ, and laid a foundation for the fuller discoveries that were to be made of him under the gospel dispensation. But, after the closest inquiry I have been able to make, they that go into the last of these ways of interpreting all these passages appear to me, either to put too great a force upon some of them; or else to make some too co-incident with others of them; and they that chuse the *first* way of interpreting them, seem to be exceedingly puzzled how to account for "the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands," as belonging to the *first principles of Christianity*. And I own, that I cannot meet with satisfaction from any author, in either of these ways of interpretation; because each side is apparently pressed with great, and to me insuperable difficulties, in their respective ways of accounting for all the particulars here mentioned, which may be seen in Pool's Synopsis, Grotius, Owen, Hammond, Pierce, and others, and which rather bewilder than instruct me.

But, in my humble opinion, we may avoid many difficulties, and steer a much clearer course between the two former, if we consider the "doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands," as a parenthesis, referring to "Jewish washings, and laying hands on the heads of their disciples," the doctrines of which it is here, "Repentance from dead works, and faith toward God;" and if we consider "repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment," as the first rudiments of Christianity; and to the *Jewish washings, and laying on of hands*, we to be considered, not as distinct principles from the rest, but as significative, under the Mosaic law, of the repentance and faith just before mentioned. Accordingly, it is to be observed, that though the doctrines of repentance and faith are intended, yet the word *doctrine* is not prefixed to them in the Greek, but only to *baptisms* and *laying on of hands*, which leads us to think that they were the doctrines taught by those ceremonies; and then the principles themselves will not be six, as they are commonly reckoned, but only four, which are very properly specified as plain and fundamental principles of Christian religion. This, if I am not much mistaken, gives us a more easy and consistent view of these verses, than any thing that has occurred to me, either in reading or meditating upon them.

deserve, tend to, and entail, not only temporal death, but also the destruction of the souls of those that are under their guilt and power, and will certainly issue in it, (which is the second death,) unless repented of and graciously pardoned. And another of these principles is the doctrine of *faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and toward God through him, (*Acts* xx. 21.) which is inseparably connected with true repentance, and consists in a firm belief of God's being and perfections, and in an humble trust in him, according to gospel-discoveries of divine grace for the remission of sins thro' Jesus Christ, as an accomplishment of ancient promises, types, and predictions of him.

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

2 (These *two* principles of Christianity were signified by various *washings* under the ceremonial law, (*chap.* ix. 10.) which held forth the doctrine of purification, and were prefigurative of the cleansing virtue of the blood and spirit of Christ; and were further signified by the laying of the *hands* of the representatives of the people on the heads of the sacrifices, and particularly in the great day of atonement, (*Lev.* xvi. 21, 22, 29, 30.) which was attended with penitent confessions of sin, and directed the faith of *Israel* to the truly proper and effectually atoning sacrifice of Jesus our High Priest :) And besides these, there are *two other* first principles, that are motives to this faith and repentance, namely, the fundamental doctrine of *the resurrection* of the bodies both of the righteous and the wicked, *one to everlasting life, and the other to shame and everlasting contempt*, (*Daniel* xii. 2.) which is fully confirmed, and further cleared up by the gospel-revelation, in which our Lord himself has plainly told us, *All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*, (*John* v. 28, 29.) and this leads us to the great article of the awful and *final judgment*, that shall ensue upon the resurrection of all mankind, who must appear before the *judgment-seat of Christ*, (*Rom.* xiv. 10, 11, and 2 *Cor.* v. 10) and that will determine their state of happiness or misery for all eternity, \* *as the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal*, (*Mat.* xxv. 34,—46.)

3 And

#### N O T E.

\* Though the judgment itself will be dispatched in a certain limit of time, it may be called *eternal judgment*, with respect to its being irreversibly decisive without appeal, and to its eternal effects, as Christ is said to

have "obtained eternal redemption for us," though the price of it was paid at once, "when he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (*chap.* ix. 12, 25.)

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

3 And as ye have been sufficiently taught these important doctrines, and ought never to forget them, but seriously reflect upon them, all your days, and will do so, unless it be your own fault thro' stupidity and sloth, (*chap. v. 11.*) I shall pass them by, and pursue my design of leading you hereafter, (*chap. vii.*) to the still sublimer parts of the gospel, relating to Christ and his priesthood, to prevent your apostatizing from him, if God shall favour me with the continuance of life, (*James iv. 15.*) and of gracious assistances, and shall give me opportunity of transmitting this epistle before it be too late: And should it be too late for any of you, dreadful would your case be indeed.

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have

4 For the state of those professors of Christianity, that turn utter apostates \*, is really desperate, past all hope of their being ever reclaimed by any means whatsoever, who have been once so far illuminated in their minds †, by

## N O T E.

\* Various are the sentiments of expositors on the descriptive characters of the persons intended in this and the next verse; and it is not very easy to keep the ideas distinct that are designed to be conveyed, particularly, by their having "tasted the heavenly gift, been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and the powers of the world to come." But as I take them all to relate to the extraordinary dispensation, and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost in the apostle's days, I have endeavoured to give such an account of them as I apprehend to be most probable, and least interfering one with another. And that none of them signify any special and saving operation of the Spirit, is very evident to me; because here is no mention made of *faith*, *love*, or any *other* grace; nor of *holiness* or *obedience*; nor of any of the  *blessings of salvation*: and the apostle seems carefully to keep to the word *tasting*, to express what experience they had of the gospel, and of the dispensation, gifts, and powers of the Holy Ghost, to intimate that they had so much knowledge and taste of those things as were sufficient to enable them to make a fair trial of them, though they did not so far relish and approve of them, upon the trial, as cordially to receive, and feed by faith upon them, and digest them to their spiritual nourishment; but were, after all, like barren ground, on which the rain often comes, and yet bears nothing but "briars and thorns," in distinction from that good ground which "brings forth herbs," ver. 7, 8. and *true believers* are distinguished from them, as persons of whom the apostle "was persuaded better things,

"even things that accompany salvation," and whom he describes by their "work and labour of love," which God, in his righteousness, or faithfulness to his covenant, "would not forget," ver. 9, 10. and he speaks of the "immutability of his counsel," with regard to their salvation, ver. 17, 18, 19. So that there can be no argument drawn from hence for falling from grace, there being no appearance of "any one special grace" in these persons: Nor is there any ground for the distress that many gracious souls have been thrown into, from a misunderstanding of these passages, as if, on account of their backslidings and lesser falls into one or another sin, it were impossible for them to be renewed to repentance: For the apostle here speaks of *only* *utter apostates*, that never had the truth of grace in their own souls, and fell away from the profession of Christianity, after they had entered upon it, and had received the greatest advantages in the nature of means that could be imagined, or ever should be attended, even by miraculous operations of the Spirit, to engage them to continue steadfast in it; and so they seem to have approached very near to, if not been actually guilty of the *sin against the Holy Ghost*. (See the notes on Mat. xii. 31. and 1 John v. 18.)

† Some suppose that as the word, (*κατενόησαν*) here rendered *enlightened*, was often used by the ancients with relation to *baptism*, the apostle means them that had been *baptized*. But it does not appear that this word was ever used in that mystical sense, until the second or third century by Justin Martyr, (dial. II.) and Clemens Alexandrinus, (lib. i. cap. 6.

have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.

by the preaching of the gospel, and the common, or, at most, miraculous operations of the Spirit, as doctrinally *to receive the knowledge of the truth*, (chap. x. 26.); and that have made some experiment, and had some relish of the dispensation of grace, set up by the gospel, under the conduct and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is by way of eminence *the gift of God*, and that with a particular regard to his miraculous operations, (Acts viii. 20.) and is sent down from heaven by the exalted Head and Saviour, *Acts* ii. 33. and *1 Peter* i. 12.); and have been made partakers of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as *prophecy, discerning of spirits, several kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues*, (1 Cor. xii. 10.)

3 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;

5 And have seen such divine credentials of the word of God, as carried conviction to their consciences of its truth and goodness, and gave them some taste of its excellency, which struck their affections with such a sort of pleasure, as our Lord describes in the *stony ground hearers, that received the good seed of the word with joy for a while, but had no root in themselves*, (Mat. xiii. 20, 21.) or as those felt that attended on *John the Baptist's* ministry, who *for a season rejoiced in his light*, (John v. 35.); and have tasted the wonderful powers that were exerted in producing *other miracles*, over and above, and as distinguished from, the forementioned gifts of the Holy Ghost, (see the note on 1 Cor. xii. 10.) such as healing the sick, and raising the dead, that were wrought in confirmation of the gospel, which, as the last dispensation that was to succeed those that were before the law, and under the law, has been usually called by the *Jews*, and has been already spoken of in this epistle, as *the world to come*. (Chap. ii. 5.)

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

6 If *such* as these shall sin wilfully, (chap. x. 26.) so as to apostatize from Christ to *Moses*, and from the profession of the gospel to *judaism*, they resolutely reject the only remedy for their recovery; and are so righteously given up of God to a desperate and voluntarily contracted blindness and hardness of their own hearts, that there is no room left for any expectation of the least possibility, by any means whatsoever, of their being so effectually renewed and changed in the temper of their minds and hearts, as to recover them to a just sense of their

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cap. 6.) nor do we find any such signification of it in all the New Testament, where it constantly relates to the *light or knowledge* whereby the mind is enlightened, and particularly in that parallel place, where the apo-

stle speaks of these *Hebrews having been illuminated*, as a term of the same import with their "having received the knowledge of the truth," (chap. x. 26, 31.)



their crimes, and sincere repentance to the saving of their souls; because they, in effect, approve of the wickedness of the *Jews* in crucifying the eternal Son of God, and shew that they themselves would put him to the ignominious and painful death of the cross over again, as an impostor, had they opportunity for it; they also persecute him again in his members; and they expose his character to the vilest reproach, by renouncing him and their profession of him, as though he really had been as infamous a person as his crucifiers pretended, and were not fit to be trusted in, adhered to, or acknowledged as a divine person, or as the true Messiah; and as though, after trial, they had found that there is neither truth nor goodness in him, or in his gospel; and so they most perversely shut themselves out from all the benefit of his crucifixion, and cause his glorious name to be blasphemed in the world.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

7 For, to shew the difference between true believers and those that are only partakers of the illuminations and miraculous operations of the Spirit, by a similitude taken from a fruitful and barren soil, true believers are like *good ground*, (Mat. xiii. 23.) which receives good seed, and is soaked with, and drinks in the rain that often descends upon it in seasonable showers, as the word, ordinances and influences of the Spirit do upon the hearts of believers, to make them fruitful: And as, in consequence hereof, this sort of earth, being thus kindly impregnated, (*TEXTUS*) brings forth grass and corn, flowers, and all useful herbs, that are pleasing and profitable to those, by and for whom it is tilled and cultivated, it is evidently blessed of God, as the author of all its increase, and he will still further command the blessing upon it, even as he did upon the whole earth in its original state, (Gen. i. 11, 29.); so true believers, being renewed by grace, bring forth fruits of righteousness, that are by Jesus Christ acceptable to God, and for his praise and glory, (Phil. i. 11.) and are manifestly under his special blessing, who gives their increase, (1 Cor. iii. 7.) and he will further own and bless them, that they may bring forth more fruits of faith, love, holiness, and obedience, yea, all the fruits of the Spirit, in their hearts and lives; and will preserve them to his heavenly kingdom; and so command the blessing upon them, *even life for evermore*. (Psalm. cxxxiii. 3.)

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh

8 But on the contrary, those professors of Christ that partake only of the forementioned illuminations, external means and advantages, without the truth of grace in their hearts, naturally produce nothing but unbelief,

nigh unto curlings  
will be burned.

unbelief, impenitence and hardness of heart, and every kind of unfruitful work of darkness; and so are like the ground, which God cursed after, and on account of the fall of man, (*Gen. iii. 17, 18.*) and which, notwithstanding all the rain that falls upon it, brings forth, instead of pleasant and useful fruit, nothing but briars and thorns, which are offensive, unprofitable, and injurious to the owner, and therefore, upon trial, is (*ἀδοκιμας*) disapproved of by him that manures it, even as those grievous revoltors were by the Lord, who spoke of them as *reprobate silver, because he had rejected them*: (*Jer. vi. 19, 33.*) And all such barren apostate professors are in the nearest danger of falling under an execution of the curse of God upon them; and their final issue is to be burned up, like briars and thorns, (*Is. xxvii. 4.*) and like chaff, when separated from the wheat, with unquenchable fire, (*Mat. iii. 12.*) to their eternal destruction, as this earth itself shall be at the last day. (*2 Pet. iii. 10.*)

9 But, beloved,  
we are persuaded  
better things of  
you, and things  
that accompany  
salvation, though  
we thus speak.

9 But as to the better part of you, my dear brethren, whom I look upon and love, as beloved of God, and as sincere believers, I am very confident, that ye are favoured with much more excellent blessings than the apostates before-mentioned ever have been partakers of; and that your end shall be better than theirs, (*ver. 7. 8.*) as ye are enriched with the blessings of special grace, in the renovation of your nature, the forgiveness of sins, justification and adoption, with other distinguishing benefits, that contain in them, stand connected with, and shall certainly issue in the eternal salvation of your souls (*ἐσχάρια σωτηρίας*); though for your caution, and for the terror of false professors, I have spoke so freely of the danger of apostatising from the profession of Christ, after an enjoyment of such high privileges as have been conferred upon them, according to what has been said about them. (*ver. 4, 5.*)

10 For God is  
not unrighteous,  
to forget your  
work and labour  
of love, which ye  
have shewed to-  
wards his name,  
in

10 This my firm persuasion concerning you is built upon the most solid grounds: It rests upon the stability of the covenant of grace, (*ver. 17, 18.*) and the evident tokens of your saving interest in it: For as God is truth itself, we may depend upon it, that he neither is, nor ever will be \* *unfaithful to his own everlasting co-*  
*venant,*

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\* *Unrighteous* (*ἀδίκος*) sometimes signifies *unfaithful*, and is used in opposition to *faithful* (*πίστες*) *Luke xvi. 10.* and *unrighteousness* stands opposed to *truth*, *Rom. ii. 8.* and this is the sense in which it seems to be most immediately intended here, with refer-

ence to the *faithfulness of God* in fulfilling his new-covenant promises: And yet he may be said to be therein *just* to the merit of his Son too, as the promised blessings are the purchase of his blood, *Rom. iii. 25, 26.*

in that ye have ministered to the faint, and do minister.

*venant, which is ordered in all things, and sure, (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)* or that, in violation of his promises of gracious rewards, any more than in unrighteousness to the merit of his Son, He will be unmindful of your *work of faith, and labour of love, (1 Thess. i. 3.)* or of that effectual and operative faith, which he has wrought in you, and which hath produced a sincere and laborious love, as the principle of all holy obedience, according to what ye have abundantly manifested, in your religious regard to his great and blessed name; in your reverential subjection to his authority and commands; and in your serious concern for his honour and glory, in that, as in many other instances, so particularly in these days of peril and reproach, ye have cheerfully and diligently attended to the various duties of compassion, tenderness, and assistance, counsel, and liberality, to his poor, despised, and afflicted saints for his sake; and still persist in all the offices of love and kindness to them, on account of their peculiar relation, and holy conformity to him, as they bear his name and image.

10 And we desire that every one of you do thew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

11 But, (21) knowing that *end* and *means* are connected in his gracious settlement, I cannot but earnestly desire, beg of God, and intreat you to labour in his strength, that, not only some, but all and every one of you may manifestly abound, and persevere in the same diligent care, study and endeavour, as many of you have already shown, in bringing forth the genuine fruits of faith and love; and that ye may do this constantly, with growing improvement, till by these means, and the blessing of God upon them, ye, like a ship that is carried to its port with full sails, (*πληροφρονῶν*) shall arrive at the fullest satisfaction, as to your own hope of interest in Christ, and in the promises of eternal life, that it is well-grounded, and shall never be disappointed; and till ye shall have this abundant assurance of faith and hope, not only now and then, but with continuance through all your days and Christian course upon earth, at the close of which ye shall *receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.* (1 Pet. i. 9.)

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

12 In order hereunto, my heart's desire and prayer is, that ye may not indulge to ease and sloth, by being careless, indolent or negligent in the use of the means of grace, or in fulfilling the duties of your holy profession; but may be imitators, (*μιμηταί*) and so tread in the steps of those believers in this and the former ages that have gone before you; and may make the best of your way after them; ye having as much encouragement

couragement hereunto, as they themselves had, who through faith in the promises, and through a patient expectation of their accomplishments in due season, and who possessing their own souls with patience in the mean while, under their various trials, are now got beyond the reach of all troubles and danger, and are in possession of the heavenly inheritance, which God had promised them, and which ye in the same way shall, thro' grace, be likewise made partakers of \*.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

13 And, for the further encouragement of your hope, and perseverance in faith and patience to the end, ye ought to consider how punctually faithful and true God is in performing his promises, and how graciously he has condescended to give us the utmost assurance of it: For to instance in the great leading promise, on the fulfilling of which all the rest of the promised blessings of the new covenant depend, When God was pleased to give Abraham, the father of the faithful, the vastly important promise of an innumerable offspring, from which the Messiah himself should descend, *in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed*, Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) he confirmed it by an oath, (ver. 17.) to give him the strongest evidence that it should certainly take effect; and because there was no God above him, or no being superior to himself, to whom he could appeal for the truth of what he said, as we do to him in our solemn oaths, as to one infinitely greater than ourselves, he applied to his own being and perfections, and as it were pawned them for the truth and performance of his promise, inasmuch that he would as soon cease to be, as break it.

14 Say-

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\* By "them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises," is generally understood to be meant the Patriarchs of old, that inherit eternal life: But as it is said of them, chap. xi. 13. "these all died in faith, not having received the promises," others have thought that the Gentiles, who had already believed, and were partakers of the promises, are here intended. (See Mr Pierce on the place. However, I think that passage may be easily understood in a light, very consistent with a supposition, that the Patriarchs are here referred to: For though they did not actually receive the accomplishment of the promises of the Messiah, and the blessings of the gospel state upon earth, which are there referred to, they did receive the promises of the eternal inheritance in heaven, which seem to be here most immediately intended, as the upshot of all the promises of the covenant of grace: And there-

fore, if the apostle had any view to the believing Gentiles, there is no need to consider it as *exclusive* of the believing Patriarchs: And *inheriting* the promises, signifies "actually possessing the things promised;" for though *faith* was necessary to the Gentiles inheriting the promised blessings of the gospel-state, as the blessing of Abraham came upon them through Jesus Christ, and they received the promise of the Spirit through faith, (Gal. iii. 14.) yet *Christian patience* must be supposed rather to follow *after* their possession of these, than to go *before* it: Accordingly, both *faith* and *patience* are usually spoken of in scripture, as preceding, and as the means of persons arriving at the heavenly inheritance, as in chap. x. 36, 37, 38. and xii. 1, 2. 1 Thess. iii. 5. James i. 3, 4. 12. and v. 8. and 1 Pet. v. 9. and in our context, ver. 15. It is said, that "after Abraham had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

14 Saying, surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.

14 Saying, I will abundantly and certainly bless thee, as with a rich variety of the good things of this life, so especially with an innumerable posterity, like the stars of heaven, and the sand on the sea-shore for multitude; and one of thy descendents shall be the Messiah himself, in whom not only thy natural offspring among the Jews, but *Gentiles* also in every nation of the world, even all thy spiritual children of both sorts, that walk in the steps of thy faith, shall be blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings. (*Gen. xxii. 16,—18.*)

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

15 And accordingly, after *Abraham* had waited with patience and hope, under the many trials of his faith that he was exercised with, God fulfilled this eminent promise in blessing him, not only with great prosperity in worldly affairs, but more especially in giving him a son, and multiplying his children while he lived; and so he enjoyed the promised blessing in them, as a pledge and earnest of all the rest that were to be brought in by his most glorious descendent, the Messiah himself, whose day he saw with an eye of faith, and was glad, (*John viii. 56.*); and when he came to die, he himself, through faith in the great promised seed, obtained the inheritance of eternal life, (*Luke xvi. 23.*) which is the final issue and consummation of all the promises, and which shall be likewise enjoyed by all his spiritual seed, through the righteousness of faith, (*Rom. iv. 13, 16. and Gal. iii. 18, 21.*) after they, like him, shall have run with patience the race which is set before them, looking to Jesus, &c. (*chap. xii. 1, 2.*) In this condescending manner, God was pleased to give the fullest assurance possible of his veracity, according to the most valid and approved method, that men use to take to satisfy their fellow-creatures of the truth of what they affirm and promise.

16 Formerly swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

16 For it is customary with men, on important occasions, to bind their depositions and promises with an oath; and they indeed (*μὲν*) as is fit in the nature of things, and is ordered by a divine command, (*Deut. vi. 13.*) swear by the supreme God, who is infinitely greater than ourselves, to give the utmost solemnity and sanction to their oath †: And such sort of swearing, to confirm the truth of what they say, is commonly and justly reckoned by men the strongest, and most decisive evidence, that can be given of the truth of their declarations,

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† This shows that a solemn oath, and particularly of a promissory nature, like oaths

of fidelity and allegiance, are lawful, when taken in a religious manner, under the gospel.

clarations, to the satisfying of all doubts, determining all debates, and silencing all contradiction, to the testimony given, or to the testifier.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

17 In this strongest way therefore, that men can take to put an end to all doubts and controversies, the great God has stooped to accommodate himself to the weakness of men, as being graciously inclined and resolved to give them the utmost satisfaction, with still more abundant evidence than was absolutely necessary, or is commonly thought to be given barely by a promise, that he might demonstrate to his people, whom he has made the heirs of all the promises, and of the blessings included in that to Abraham; and might satisfy them, that his promise is as sure to them as it was to him, and that his free and eternal purpose and infinitely wise counsel of peace, which he has revealed and ascertained in the promise, is unchangeably the same, and never shall be repealed, defeated, or falsified: For this reason, I say, he condescended so far, as to swear to it by himself, and so he has as it were sealed his promise by a solemn oath, interposing *that* (*ἡ ὑπόσχεσις*) for its performance, to put an end to all the unbelieving objections, doubts, and fears, which he foresaw his own children, under a sense of their unworthiness, and of the difficulty and unlikelihood of its accomplishment, would be apt to raise about it.

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

18 That so by two unchangeable things, his promise and his oath, in either, and much more in both, of which, it is absolutely impossible that the unalterable true and faithful God, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, (Jam. i. 17.) and who can as soon cease to be God, as cease to be true; we might have the firmest ground possible for the most abundant, prevailing, and solid comfort, and might possess it with unshaken confidence, and the sweetest delight in our own souls, to overcome all our doubts and fears, and support us under all our trials and afflictions; even we, who, like the manslayer under the law, that flew to the city of refuge for his life, (*Numb. xxxv. 11, 12.*) have been enabled to fly, under a sense of guilt and danger, with

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prelate; otherwise the apostle would never have spoke of an oath with so much honour, as a proper means of confirmation, to put an end to all strife; and God himself, under the law, had enjoined that solemn oaths should be taken by his people for such like purposes in several cases, as in Exod. xxii. 11. Numb. xxx. 1. Deut. vi. 13. But we may be sure, that he would never have laid these injunctions upon them, were swearing,

on proper occasions unlawful, or inexpedient: And both before the law of Moses, and under it, we often read of the most religious persons swearing themselves, and requiring an oath from others, for the more strongly ascertaining the truth of what they said. See among other places, Gen. xxi. 23, 24. and xxiv. 3. and xlvii. 31. Josh. ii. 12, 17, 20. Judg. xvi. 12. and 1 Sam. xx. 17. and xxiv. 21, 23. (See also the note on Mat. v. 34.)

with the utmost eagerness and speed, concern, and vigour, for deliverance from pursuing wrath and justice, and for safety in Christ, the promised seed; to apprehend and fix by faith on him, and on the grace and faithfulness of God through him, according to the promises, which are all confirmed, and shall be fulfilled even to eternal life, by him; who, together with all that is in him †, is proposed to our faith and hope in the declarations and promises of the gospel, that we may have recourse to him for our support and comfort under all tribulations here, and for our everlasting happiness hereafter.

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,

19 Which object of hope, as laid hold on, or hoped and trusted in by faith, that goes out of ourselves to it, has a mighty efficacy, both to secure our souls from destruction, and to hold them fast and steady amidst all the dangers and troubles of this present life, as a strong anchor, cast out of a ship, does the vessel that is tossed about by the winds and waves of a tempestuous sea: And as Christ himself, the object of this hope, is passed through the region of the air, into the place of God's peculiar residence and glory; (as the high priest under the law passed through the second vail into the holy of holies, chap. ix. 3, 7.) so our hope in Christ casts anchor, not downwards, as other anchors are cast down to the bottom of the sea; but upwards, as it enters through the visible heavens after him, into that glorious world which lyes beyond them, and is hid by them, as by a vail, from our corporal sight; and there it fastens upon him, and the Father through him, as exhibited in the promises.

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High

20 Into which blessed and glorious state our exalted Head and Saviour is entered, not indeed like the *Aaronical* high priests of old, with respect to their going alone, through the vail, into the holy place, without any

#### N O T E.

† Hope in this, and, perhaps, in the next verse, cannot well mean the *grace* of hope that is in us: for it is said to be a "hope set before us," and a hope which "we fly to, and lay hold upon," in allusion to "the manslayer's flying to the city of refuge," and laying hold of the hope provided for his security there: and it is called an "anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast," in allusion to the anchor of a ship, which does not hold it stedfast, as it is in the ship itself, but as cast out of it, and fastening on sure ground at a distance from it. Hope therefore there includes, and in this verse directly signifies, the object of hope, or that which is be-

held in, as it often does in other places, particularly in Acts xxviii. 20. and 1 Tim. i. 1. and his object of it most directly means Christ, who is the hope which is said to have "entered into that within the vail:" and yet the promises, and God through him, according to the promises, which are all "Yea and Amen in him," 2 Cor. i. 20. and which had been spoken of in the foregoing context, may be considered as included together with Christ, as the object of our hope: But we cannot be said to lay hold, and cast anchor on him, without an exercise of the grace of hope in him.

high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

any other being allowed to go thither after them, (*chap. ix. 7.*); but as the pledge and earnest of our following him, that are true believers in him, who is gone thither in a double *public* capacity for our safety and happiness, and to act there for us; One is that of a *fore-runner* †, who, as such, declares what he has done and suffered on upon earth, to make way for our arrival after him, and notifies in heaven, that we in due time and order are coming to be there with him; he also prepares, secures, and takes possession of glorious mansions there for us, (*John xiv. 2. and Ephes. ii. 6.*) and makes all things ready for our entrance into the holiest of all after him by faith now, (*chap. x. 19,—22.*) and for our *personal* entrance in due time, that *we may be for ever with him; where he is, to behold his glory*, (*John xvii. 24.*) And the other public character, in which he is entered, is that of an *high priest*, which Jesus our Saviour is, who, as has been observed, (*chap. v. 6.*) is constituted in that office, not indeed after the order of *Aaron*, which was temporary and successive, from one age to another; but after the much higher order of *Melchisedec*, as an interceding, as well as atoning high priest, that has no successor, but abides in his person and office for ever. (See the note on *chap. v. 10.*) This brings us to the resemblance there is between Christ and *Melchisedec*, which was proposed (*chap. v. 10, 11. and vi. 1,—3.*) to be considered particularly and at large; and shall be now explained in the following comparison between them. *chap. vii.*

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How incumbent is it on gospel-professors to be progressive in all spiritual understanding! Though the first principles of religion must be retained and adhered to, such as the doctrines of *repentance* and *faith*, (which were signified by legal washings and impositions of hands) and the doctrines of *the resurrection* and *a judgment to come*; yet we ought not to stop here, but to advance forwards, in still sublimer points of the gospel, for further edification in faith, comfort, and holiness unto complete salvation. How great is the danger of *mere professors*, that are partakers only of such gifts of the Spirit, whether ordinary or extraordinary, as are common to *nominal* and *real* Christians! They may have these, and yet may have no more than such a taste of the good things of the gospel, as their carnal hearts soon disrelish and reject; and so may apostatize from their profession of Christ, and, like barren ground that brings forth nothing but briars and thorns, may be disapproved of God, and in the nearest danger of falling under executions of his wrath and curse, as fuel fit for everlasting burnings: And this will certainly be the dreadful end of *utter apostates*, who, as much as in them lies, crucify the

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### N O T E.

† A *fore-runner* is wont to be left in dignity than those that are to follow him: but Christ is infinitely superior to us, and does more for us by way of causality, and authoritative management in his own right, than any other

*fore-runner* could do for those that were to come after him; and it is a high honour put upon all the saints, that they have such a glorious *fore-runner* as Jesus to appear in the presence of God for them.



Son of God again, and put him to open shame! and so desperate is their case! that they cannot possibly be recovered to true repentance. But O how safe and happy are those that are partakers of special grace! They are favoured with better things, even things that stand connected with, and shall certainly issue in eternal salvation: For the faithful God will be ever mindful of his covenant-engagements, and of their faith, and labour of love, which they manifest toward himself, in affectionately ministering to the saints, for his sake, in obedience to his command, and for the glory of his name; they are like good ground, that brings forth excellent fruit, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ; and are under a divine blessing for improvement unto eternal life. And O what a sure and blessed ground of hope have they in that promise and oath of God, that his unalterable counsel of wisdom and love concerning them shall be accomplished! As solemn oaths are justly deemed the strongest testimony for confirming depositions among men; so the most high God has condescended to swear solemnly by himself, to satisfy the heirs of salvation about the veracity of his promise, according to his eternal counsel, which is unchangeable and irreversibly confirmed to them, in-like manner as it was to *Abraham*. They ought therefore to depend firmly upon it for their abundant consolation; and this should engage their utmost care and diligence, in the use of all the means of grace, and in an exercise of faith and love with perseverance therein, that they may attain a full assurance of hope, and *that* to the end of their days, as followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. And O how safe and solid is the hope, that has Christ, and a promising God in him, for its object, and flies for refuge to him! This is an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and enters into heaven itself, after our exalted Head and Saviour, who is gone thither, as an incomparably glorious Forerunner, and as our great High Priest, after the order of *Melchisedec*, who ever lives to make intercession for us.

## C H A P. VII.

*The apostle returns from his digression to the comparison he had proposed to make between the priesthood of Melchisedec and of Christ, in which he gives an account of Melchisedec, 1,—3. Shews the excellency of his above the Levitical priesthood, 4,—10. Applies all this to Christ, to set forth the superior dignity and perfection of his priesthood, even to the superceding and disannulling of that, which was after the order of Aaron under the law, 11,—24. And draws an inference from this, to the encouragement of the faith and hope of the church; 25,—28.*

## TEXT.

FOR this Melchisedec king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him;

## PARAPHRASE.

TO proceed then to show the excellency of Christ's priesthood, It bears the most eminent correspondence to that of *Melchisedec*, which vastly exceeded that of *Aaron*: For this famous *Melchisedec*, after whose order Christ is an High Priest, as has been mentioned once and again, (*chap. v. 10.* see the note there, and *vi. 20.*) and of whom our Lord is the great antitype both in his kingly and priestly office: This *Melchisedec*, was a certain renowned king of *Jerusalem*, anciently called *Salem*, (*Pf. lxxvi. 2.*); and that he might be the fitter type of Christ, he was also an eminent priest; peculiarly appointed and constituted, as such, by the

only living and true God to minister before him, who is far exalted above all gods, (*Pf. xcvi. 2.*) ; and he was so great a man in his person and office, that when the patriarch Abraham returned from his conquest and slaughter of the four kings of the nations round about him, *Melchisedec* met and entertained him with bread and wine; and in the execution of his priestly office, authoritatively pronounced a blessing upon him, (*Gen. xiv. 18,—20.*) ; and so he was a high priest, prior and superior to *Aaron*, not of one nation only, as *Aaron* was; but of all nations of the earth, before *Israel* were separated, as a peculiar people to the Lord; and he therein was the more exact and complete type of Christ, who is the high priest of *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*. (*1 John ii. 1, 2.*)

1 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all: first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also, king of Salem, which is, king of peace;

2 To this *Melchisedec* also, *Abraham*, in acknowledgment of his superior character of priesthood, paid tithes, which were the tenth part of all the spoils that he had taken in the war, (*Gen. xiv. 20.*)—As to his *titles*, in which he was a remarkable type of Christ, He was, according to the signification of his name, King of righteousness, being a just and holy man in himself, and in the administration of his government; and then (*ισχυράς εἰς*) he was also, by a denomination taken from *Salem*, the place where he was king, stiled, according to the meaning of that word, *King of peace*, which was the effect of his righteous government; and so he was a proper and lively type of Christ, who is anointed of God to his *kingly*, as well as *priestly* office; is sinless, holy, and righteous in his own person, (*ver. 26.*) ; loves righteousness and hates iniquity; and the sceptre of whose kingdom is a *right sceptre*, (*PL xiv. 6, 7.*) who is also the *Lord our righteousness*, by whose obedience many are made righteous: (*Jer. xxiii. 6.* and *Rom. v. 19.*) And, as the fruit of this, he is the *Prince of peace*, (*Is. ix. 6.*) he having made peace with God, and reconciled us to him by the blood of his cross, (*Ephes. ii. 14,—16.*) and thereupon preached peace; and he is the author of all the blessings of spiritual peace, and prosperity, and of an affectionate and holy harmony among his subjects between themselves, in the administration of his kingdom, as well as of peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost in their own souls.

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither

2 As to *Melchisedec's* original, It is purposely concealed in the scripture-history of him, which gives no account of his father or mother; nor do we find any genealogy of his priesthood, as we do of *Aaron* and his family,

ther beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

family, or of the *Levitical* priests, whose father was *Aaron*, and whose mother, in their several generations was to be an *Israelite*, (Lev. viii. 2. and xxi. 14.) He did not, like them, descend from *Aaron*, or derive his pedigree from any family of priesthood whatsoever, there having been none of that office among any predecessors in his house; nor indeed is there the least account of any ancestors that he had; nor have we any record either of his birth or death, or of the beginning or end of his priesthood; but he is mentioned without any notice taken of either of these, as though he had never *began to be* in any date of time, and had never *expired* and come to an end of his life, or priesthood: But \* he is represented in this peculiar manner, with regard to all these particulars, that he might be a more eminent figure, and bear the highest resemblance possible of the eternal Son of God, who in his *human nature* had no earthly father; nor was, any more than *Melchisedec*, of the tribe of *Levi*; and in his *divine nature* had no mother, nor any human parentage at all; but was from everlasting to everlasting God, and his designation to office, by covenant-constitution, was before all worlds: And as he is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, (chap. xiii. 3.) so he continues everlastingly, singly and alone, without any predecessor or successor, as well as without any partner in his priestly office, in which he *ever lives to make intercession for them that come unto God by him*. (ver. 25.)

\* Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch *Abraham* gave the tenth of the spoils.

4 Now, in order to your having the more exalted thoughts of the excellency and dignity of Christ's priesthood, and being convinced of the danger of adhering to that of the *Levitical* tribe, I desire that ye would carefully observe, and attentively reflect upon the foregoing account of *Melchisedec*, that ye may see how uncommonly great a man he was, in his office and favour with God, in which he prefigured Christ, according to the magnificent description that has but now been given of him, to whom *Abraham* himself, that noble progenitor, not only of one, but of all the tribes of *Israel*; even he, great as he was, and in whom ye yourselves glory above all others, (*John* viii. 39, 53.) made a religious offering, as to his superior, under the character of the priest of the most high God, even an offering of the tenth part of all the spoils that he had made

#### N O T E.

\* "Abides a priest continually," seems to refer, not to *Melchisedec*, but to the nearest antecedent, "the Son of God;" and so may be rendered, by adding a small, but very common ellipsis of the article (*vs*) who *abides* a priest continually, or unto perpetuity. (See Mr Pierce on the place.)

made of the riches of those kings, and of their armies, which he had vanquished in war, (*ver. 1.*) He therefore must be greater, by the ordination of God, than *Abraham* himself \*, and much more must *Christ* be so, whose type only *Melchisedec* was.

5 And verily they that are of the sons of *Levi*, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, tho' they come out of the loins of *Abraham*:

5 And truly, to show how the dignity of the priesthood appears in the business of *tithing*, the descendants of *Aaron* among the sons of *Levi*, who were invested with the office of priesthood under the law, had a particular warrant to claim and receive tithes, which the Lord had appropriated to himself, (*Lev. xxvii. 30, 31.*) from all the people of *Israel*, according to the settlement that was made of those dues in the law of *Moses*, as to the matter and manner of them, (*Numb. xviii. 21, 26.*) and these they received from the rest of the tribes, even of their brethren according to the flesh, though *they*, as well as themselves, were descendants from the loins of *Abraham*, and, as such, had originally an equal right to all the privileges that pertained to them, as his offspring; and so the very law of tithes shows that superior honour belongs to him who receives them, above him that pays them.

6 But he, whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of *Abraham*, and blessed him that had the promises.

6 But *Melchisedec*, whose genealogy is unwritten and unknown, cannot be reckoned a descendent from the *Levitical* priests, he having existed long before any of that tribe were in being. This extraordinary man was so much greater than they, that he had the honour of receiving tithes of their eminent patriarch *Abraham* himself, as has been observed, (*ver. 2, 4.*); and, more than this, he, as a priest, authoritatively pronounced a blessing, in the name of *the most high God*, upon that father of the faithful with whom God made the covenant of promises, and confirmed it with an oath, (*chap. vi. 13, 16.*) as it related to him and his posterity, who claim and hold all their privileges and blessings under him, as their representative therein.

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

7 And from this consideration itself it appears, that there is no manner of clause to dispute or doubt, either upon the common principles of reason, or of revelation, but that *Melchisedec* was a more excellent person in his office than *Abraham*; because an authoritative benediction, as from God and in his name, is not delivered by a lesser

#### N O T E.

\* Barely giving does not make the receiver greater than the giver; for our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," (*Acts xx. 35.*) which intimates that, in the way of *charity*, the giver is the greatest; and therefore the argument for *Melchisedec's*

being greater than *Abraham* rises from *Abraham's* giving or delivering the tenth to *Melchisedec* under the character of the "priest of the most high God," in acknowledgment of him as such.

a lesser to a greater, but by a greater to a lesser person in the office, by virtue of which he blesses him. Christ the antitype therefore must needs be a much greater high priest still, as he, in the right of his own purchase, effectually blesses his people with all spiritual blessings.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

8 And there is this further proof of *Melchisedec's* superiority to all the sons of *Levi*, (ver. 5.) that here, in their case, by the constitution of the law of *Moses*, they which received tithes are like the rest of the whole human race, mortal men, whose birth and death in their several generations we are well acquainted with by the sacred writings: But, in the other case of *Melchisedec*, he received tithes, who is not spoken of in the scripture under the character of a mortal man, or of one that died for any other to succeed him in his office; but is represented only as *living*, as if he had no beginning of days or end of life, as to his person or priesthood, (ver. 3.); and so the record stands of him as if he lived for ever, the design of which was, that he might be the more eminent type of Christ, who in his divine nature really has from everlasting to everlasting an immortal life, and who tho' in his human nature he once died, is now alive, and never died out of his office, but lives in his priesthood for ever after the order of *Melchisedec*. (Chap. v. 6.)

9 And as I may so say, *Levi* also, who received tithes, paid tithes in *Abraham*.

9 And to add one thought more, to sum up the argument relating to the superiority of *Melchisedec* to all the *Levitical* priests, I may say that in a certain sense, as by just construction, the whole tribe of *Levi* also, who by the law received tithes, did themselves virtually pay tithes to him, in and through *Abraham*, as their common father, representative, and covenant-head.

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father when *Melchisedec* met him.

10 For *Levi* and all his descendents were comprehended in their natural and covenant-father *Abraham*; they having been included in him, not only as an effect in its cause, and offspring in their parents, but also as a people are in their representatives \*, which *Abraham* was to all

#### N O T E.

\* It seems to me that *Levi's*, or, as it is to be understood, that his and his son's paying tithes in, or by *Abraham*, (*ἐκ ἀβραάμ*) is to be considered with relation to their being in *Abraham's* loins, not merely as their natural; but as their covenant-father, who had received the promises for them as well as for himself; otherwise I am at a loss to see for what purpose " *Abraham's* having " the promises " is mentioned in this argument, ver. 6. which may be naturally supposed to be referred to here: And this may

help to illustrate the doctrines of the imputation of *Adam's* sin and *Christ's* righteousness. As all mankind were in *Adam*, as their natural father and federal head, when he sinned, so they virtually sinned in him: And as all *Christ's* spiritual seed were in him as their public representative and federal head, when he died for their sins, and rose again for their justification, so they virtually died and rose in him. (See *Ephes. ii. 6.*) Accordingly, as *Adam's* sin actually takes place upon all his offspring, when they come

all *Israel* in the covenant of promises, made with him for himself and them before *Melchisedec* met him, and received tithes from him, and blessed him, (*Gen. xii. 1.—3.*) and so he was undoubtedly greater in his office than any *Levite* whatsoever.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of *Melchisedec*, and not be called after the order of *Aaron*?

11 To apply all this therefore to the main argument in hand, relating to our Lord Jesus Christ, the great *High Priest over the house of God*, (*chap. x. 21.*) if there were an accomplishment of the good things themselves, that were signified by the ordinances of the *Levitical* priesthood; or if perfection were really and effectually to be obtained, in point of atonement to satisfy divine justice, and cleanse the conscience from guilt, (*chap. ix. 9.*) and to give us acceptance with God to eternal life, together with an humble confidence in him, and holy liberty and boldness of access to him, and hope of future glory; and if the perfect state of the church, as to its institutions of spiritual worship, were to be acquired by the offerings, sacrifices, and services, that belonged to the priesthood, which the sons of *Levi* were concerned in according to the law: (for it was together with, and in relation to that priesthood, that the church of *Israel* received the ceremonial law †, by the ministry of *Moses*, and were obliged to observe it, which ascertained all the privileges and blessings that were to accrue to them from it:) if, I say, perfection, with regard to these things, were attainable by the *Levitical* priesthood itself, or by the whole system of the law which it belonged to, What necessity, or further occasion could there be, that another sort of priest, of a different and higher rank and order, should be set up and exalted to the dignity of that office, as it has been shown (*chap. v. 5, 6.*) Christ was to be after the order of *Melchisedec*? And why should he not be denominated, as he is not in any place of scripture, a priest according to the common course of the *Levitical* priesthood, which was to be after the order of *Aaron*? There certainly could be no need of this new and higher sort of priesthood; but it must be entirely useless, upon a supposition that all the ends of a priesthood,

#### N O T E.

to derive their natural being from him; so Christ's righteousness actually takes place upon all his spiritual seed, when they come to derive spiritual life from him, by virtue of their vital union, through faith, to him.

† This, as some may think, seems to intimate that the *Levitical* priesthood was set up before the giving of the law, whereas the law was given at Mount Sinai before the institution of that priesthood. But though the

moral law was delivered, *Exod. 24.* before the institution of the *Levitical* priesthood, yet *Israel's* acceptable performance of the obedience it required under that dispensation, depended upon that priesthood: and the ceremonial law, which contained all the services, sacrifices, and ordinances of worship, pertaining to that priesthood, was given after the institution of the priesthood itself. *Lev. i. 1.—6.*

hood, and of the law to which it belonged, could be perfectly answered by that priesthood itself. It is therefore plain from this single consideration, that both *that* priesthood and the law, which were inseparably interwoven, were to be abolished, as they now are, to make way for a better priesthood, and evangelical dispensation, in the person of Christ.

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

12 For the order of the priesthood being altered, so as to be transferred from that, which was appointed by, and stood connected with the law of *Moses*, to another of a different and more excellent kind, there must of necessity, in consequence of this, be a like alteration made, as to the law itself; so as to abolish *that*, (the whole administration of which was confined to the *Aaronical* priesthood) and to introduce *another* evangelical constitution that pertains to, and derives its efficacy from this more excellent priesthood of a superior order.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

13 And that Christ is not a priest of *Aaron's* order, like those under the law, is evident; for he, who was pointed to in all the things that have hitherto been said about *Melchisedec* and his priesthood, was not of the tribe of *Levi*, to which the legal priesthood was confined; but he sprang from another tribe of *Israel*, which had no share in, but was, together with all the other tribes, excluded from that priesthood; none of them, besides that of *Levi*, having had any right to officiate in the priestly character, by offering the sacrifices that were presented on the brazen altar, or performing any services relating to *that* \*, or to the altar of incense.

14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

14 For it is plain beyond all controversy, as had been manifested beforehand (*προφητείας*) in an ancient prophecy of the *Messiah*, (Gen. xlix. 10.) and was acknowledged by the chief priests and scribes themselves, (*Mat.* ii. 4,—6.) that *the Christ* was to arise from the tribe of *Judah*; and it is certain from our Lord's *genealogy*, (*Luke* iii. 23,—38.) that he arose from that tribe, and particularly from the royal family of *David*: But concerning

#### N O T E.

\* When king *Uzziah*, who was of the tribe of *Judah*, went into the temple, "to burn incense on the altar of incense," it is said, that he "transgressed against the Lord his God, and *Azariah*, the chief priest, and four-score priests of the Lord withstood him, saying, It pertains not unto thee, *Uzziah*, to burn incense to the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of *Aaron*." And God was so highly offended at the king's attempt to break in upon his institution, that *Uzziah* was immediately struck

with a "leprosy in his forehead; and he was a leper unto the day of his death." (2 Chron. xxvi. 16,—21.) God hereby testified in the severest manner against such, as under that dispensation should venture to exercise any part of the priestly function; and exemplarily punished one of the tribe of *Judah*, though a king, for it, the more remarkably to exclude *that tribe* from any pretensions to it; and *this is the tribe* from which the apostle observes in the next verse our Lord sprung.

cerning which tribe, *Moses* in the book of the law never once mentioned, or intimated that any one of them should exercise the priestly function under that dispensation; and his silence about it is a sufficient proof, (as silence in all cases of institution is,) that none of the tribe of *Judah* ever had any authority to assume that office to themselves.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of *Melchisedec* there ariseth another priest;

15 And it is yet more abundantly plain, even to a demonstration, \* that the priesthood, and consequently the law that depended upon it, is so changed as to be abolished, according to what has been said, (*ver. 12.*); because, answerable to former predictions, another priest is now raised up, by the ordination of God, after the likeness, which is much the same with after the order, of *Melchisedec*, in a resemblance of his priesthood, which has been shown to be of a different and more excellent nature, than that of *Aaron*; (*ver. 1, — 11.*)

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

16 Even a high priest, who is constituted in his office, not according to the law of *Moses*, which settled the Levitical priesthood, and consisted of precepts that may be called *carnal commandments*, as they required the sacrifices of beasts, and consisted of such rites as *sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh*, (*chap. ix. 13.*); and as the priests themselves were consecrated to their office by carnal ceremonies, and were no more than weak, frail, and dying men, according to the order of a fleshly generation, and so needed a succession of them to perform its functions from age to age; and as all this was enjoined by a system of laws contained in *carnal ordinances* which were imposed on the Israelites until the time of reformation, (*chap. ix. 10.*) that was to be made under the more spiritual and holy dispensation of the gospel, relating to the worship, privileges, and blessings of the church; But, in opposition to the nature of that priesthood, Christ was made a High Priest by a more excellent and ever abiding constitution, in which he was consecrated to that office, according to the ability which he has to execute it, by virtue of that immortal life which he has in himself as the eternal Son of God, and by virtue of his re-assumed human life in heaven, according to which he lives for ever to discharge his glorious priesthood in his own person, and to give eternal life

#### N O T E.

\* I take this and the two next verses to be brought in as a second proof of what was asserted, *ver. 12.* about the "change of the priesthood and of the law." The proof given of this in *ver. 13, 14.* was taken from Christ's being not of the tribe of *Levi*, but

of *Judah*; and the yet far more evident proof of that point here, and in the two following verses, is taken from the entirely different nature of the legal priesthood, and the priesthood of Christ.



life to all those for whom he acts as a priest, without any partner with him, or successor to him therein: And so his priesthood must be incomparably more excellent, perfect, efficacious, and durable, than any that preceded it under the law \*.

17 For he testifieth, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

17 For, as has been observed again and again, (*chap. v. 6. 10. see the note there, and vi. 20.*) God the Father declared, in a way of divine testimony to him by the mouth of *David*, even while the Levitical priesthood was in its full glory, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*, (*Psal. cx. 4.*) that is, thou art peculiarly and eminently a priest, not after the similitude of *Aaron's* lower, but of *Melchisedec's* higher priesthood, (*ver. 15.*); not for any limited dispensation that shall give way to a better, nor in a succession of one priest after another; but immutably in thine own person, till all the ends of thy acting in that character shall be perfected; and thenceforth to all eternity, in the honours that belong to thee for having completely executed that office, and in its glorious effects to the eternal salvation of the whole church.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

18 For in this new and everlasting priesthood of Christ after the order of *Melchisedec*, there is, in reality, an abrogation of the whole system of the *Mosaic* law, and of all its institutions, which depended upon the Levitical priesthood, and preceded the introduction of the gospel-state, which is built upon the priesthood of Christ. This, I say, is now certainly abolished and set aside, by reason of its insufficiency, unavailableness, and impossibility to purge the conscience from guilt, and justify a sinner to eternal life: As the moral law could not do this, *in that it was weak through the flesh*, (*Rom. viii. 3. see the note there;*) so neither could the ceremonial law, in that it was only a type or shadow of good things to come, and not the very image, much less the substance of them; and could not by any of its sacrifices take away sin. (*Chap. x. 1,—4.*)

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but bringing-

19 For the *Mosaic* law was of itself incapable of perfecting its worshippers in any thing that pertains to the conscience, and to reconciliation with God: It was only designed to prefigure and prepare the way for, and point

#### N O T E.

\* Though Christ died in his human nature, that was because he was a sacrifice, as well as a priest; and his offering up himself as a sacrifice was an act of his priesthood; and so he officiated as a priest in his very dying; and consequently did not die out of his office for others to succeed him, as the Levitical priests did, since his priesthood suffer-

ed no interruption by his dying; and as in divine nature it was impossible that he should die; so according to its powerful life, he continued immortal in his sacerdotal office, and he re-assumed his human life, that he might fulfil the remainder of his priesthood in ever living to make intercession for them that come unto God by him, *ver. 25.*

bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

point to, what should be effectual for these purposes, as it was our *schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith* in him, (Gal. iii. 24.); but the introduction of the gospel-state, and of Christ, this better High Priest, and of his truly expiatory sacrifice, who in the discharge of his priestly office is the object of our hope, gives us a better ground of confidence, and a surer hope toward God, than the law ever could; and has perfected all that was deficient in the law itself, and prefigured by it: Under these considerations, *we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Christ*, (Ephes. iii. 12.) and so, as a *holy priesthood*, may offer up *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, (1 Pet. ii. 5.); yea, we have a better, nearer, and more advantageous approach to God through Christ by faith, in gospel-worship, than even the *Aaronical* priests themselves had with their sacrifices and offerings, when they went into the holy of holies; and we are not debarred this liberty, as the people then were, who were kept at a distance; but, *through Jesus Christ, every true believer has access by one Spirit to the Father*. (Ephes. ii. 18.)

20 And in as much as not without an oath *he was made priest*:

20 And we may well be assured of this, for as much as he was constituted in his office, not as the priests of old were in a common way, but by a solemn oath of God himself, to signify the excellency, immutability, and perpetuity of his priesthood, as what should never fail.

21 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord swears, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.)

21 For all the former priests under the law were constituted in their office, without the solemnity of ratification by an oath; nothing of that kind being ever hinted in their consecration to it, which left their office in a repealable state, whenever God should please: But this great and glorious High Priest, even *Jesus*, whom we are speaking of, (*ver. 22.*) was constituted in his office with all the irrevocable solemnity of an oath by God his Father, who said unto him in the place so often referred to already, (*Psal. cx. 4.*) The Lord hath sworn by himself, and will never retract or reverse it, Thou art, in thine own person, without any successor, an everlasting and unchangeable High Priest, after the similitude of *Melchisedec*, even unto the consummation of all things. (See the note on chap. v. 10.)

22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

22 In proportion then to the superior excellence of *this* to the *Aaronical* priesthood, as to the nature of the office and the manner of establishment in it, *Jesus*, the once crucified, but now exalted Saviour, was constituted by God the Father's own appointment and investiture,

an undertaker, promiser and sponsor \*, in a way of suretyship to him for us, to ratify the new covenant by his death, and to take effectual care that all the requirements be answered, that were necessary to secure the accomplishment of its promises; which is a better covenant †, than that made with *Israel* at mount *Sinai*, as it has a better surety than any of the high priests of old could be; and as its administration is with greater light and simplicity, and with wider extent to the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and is *established upon better promises*, (chap. viii. 6.) which also may be considered

29

## N O T E.

\* A *surety* or *sponsor* (1770) is one that draws nigh, undertakes or promises, and is bound for another, either to do or pay that for him which he cannot or will not do or pay for himself: It is one who engages for another, that the obligations which he is under shall be one way or another answered. Such a surety is Christ, not for God to his people, as some would have it; for God needs no surety for him to secure the performance of his promises to us; nor do we need any one from him, merely for the confirmation of our faith in them, since his own unchangeable veracity, as manifested in his word and oath, are an absolute security, and the highest evidence of it, and of his performing them as had been declared, ch. vi. 13,—19. And in the nature of things, a surety ought to be a person of more credit and ability than he is for whom he engages, or at least ought to be one that is provided to secure against some defect or failure of fidelity or capacity that possibly may be found in him for whom he is a surety; neither of which can be said of God without blasphemy. And if Christ were only in a *lex fese* a surety, in a way of *witness* for God; this is by no means a proper suretyship; nor is it any thing different in its nature and kind from what was done by the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, in the testimony they have given under divine inspiration to him.

But "Christ is a surety for us to God:" We needed that he should be so, as we are sinful creatures, and insolvent of what is required by the law, as a covenant of works, which was broke for want of a surety to engage for our keeping it; and without a surety, the new covenant would be in danger of being broken on our part, as that with Adam was. And as the apostle's discourse in this context is professedly all along about the *priesthood* of Christ, his being a *surety* relates to the execution of his *priestly office*, which, like that of the priests under the Law, was *for the people to God, and as for God to the*

people: And though the covenant of grace, considered as a *testament*, was confirmed by the death of Christ, (chap. ix. 15,—17. see the note there,) and all its blessings were purchased by it; and though the covenant was made, with a reference to his death, as the procuring cause of all its benefits, in the virtue of which they should be brought home and applied to us, through faith in him; yet his death did not procure the covenant itself, which was made long before, with a *promise* of the death of Christ, as the *grand condition* of its taking effect: But the covenant itself is merely the effect of the infinite wisdom and grace of God in the eternal counsels of his will; and its dispensations to us is founded upon the covenant-transactions before all worlds between the Father and Son, about the manner and means of accomplishing its great design, as might be most honourable to all God's perfections in bringing many sons to glory. Accordingly, Christ as the *surety* of the covenant undertook to satisfy divine justice for all their transgressions, to redeem them from the curse of the law, and deserved wrath and misery, slavery and ruin, and to purchase for them all the blessings of grace and glory, (chap. ix. 13.) and he further engaged to furnish them with all those supplies of his Spirit and grace, through the merit of his blood, as should be necessary to renew and sanctify them, and bring them to faith and repentance, and enable them to fulfil the duties of the covenant, that should be incumbent upon them, to prevent their violating its sacred bonds, and defeating their interest in it, by wilful disobedience and utter apostasy, through the power of indwelling corruptions, and surrounding temptations, by which they would certainly miscarry, were they left to themselves.

† "Christ's being the surety of a better covenant," seems to suppose that the covenant made with *Israel* had a surety, which may refer, not to Moses personally, but to the

the

as a *testamentary covenant* †, in one view of it, as it was finally put in force by the death of Christ, who, as a *testator*, bequeathed all its blessings to the heirs of promise. (*Chap. ix. 15,—17.*)

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death :

23 And indeed, further to show the weakness and unprofitableness of the legal dispensation, (*ver. 18.*) it is well known, that though the *high priest's office itself* were but *one* ; and though but *one at a time* could execute it, yet there was a succession of *many* of them that officiated in it from generation to generation ; because they being merely mortal men, were not permitted, by reason of death, to live in the perpetual exercise of their office ; nor was it possible that they should, since they all died like other men, and then their priestly function, as vested in their own persons respectively, died with them, and they could never re-assume it again, or continue to carry it on in another world ; which

shows

#### N O T E S.

the *high priest*, as such, who, in the execution of his office, was a sort of typical *mediator* and *surety* on behalf of the people to God, by means of a typical expiation, which he made on the great day of atonement. (See Dr Owen on the place.)

† The Greek word rendered *covenant* (*διαθήκη* a *diathēkē*) *disposo*, and the Hebrew word, which answers it, (*ברית* a *brith*) *creavit* signifies any *disposition*, *constitution*, *settlement*, or *establishment* of things ; and so is applicable to either of those senses, wherever it is found in the Old or New Testament ; and what sort of *constitution* or *establishment* is meant by it, in every place, is to be gathered from the context, and the nature of the things there spoken of, whether it be a constitution by a law, or mutual compact, or a free promise, or a testament : It is mostly translated *covenant* in this epistle, as well as in other places, and it may very well be so ; unless when there is a particular reference to the nature and use of a *testament* among men, in which view it seems to be represented, *chap. ix. 15,—17.* with reference to the death of a testator to put it in force. But which way soever it be rendered, it signifies a *constitution*, *settlement*, or *establishment* of one kind or other ; and when it is used to express the *covenant of grace*, which is a covenant of *free promises*, it may be considered as containing the nature of a *testamentary covenant*, which depends entirely upon the good-will and pleasure of the donor, as to the blessings bestowed, and the persons that shall have them ; and as to the time, way, terms, and means, in which the bestowment of them shall take effect through the death of Christ, rather than as containing the na-

ture of a *proper*, *strict*, and *formal covenant*, which, in our usual acceptation of the word, is an agreement between two or more parties about things, that are, or may be in their own power to perform ; which can never be reconciled to the scripture-representation of the *covenant of grace*, as made between God and sinful men ; and, perhaps, this may be one reason why this covenant is commonly expressed by a word, which, of all other constitutions, primarily signifies a *testament* ; and I see no inconsistency in supposing, that the substance of the same gracious settlement, or disposition of spiritual blessings, may be called both a *Covenant* and a *Testament*, only with this difference, that when it is called a *Covenant*, it leads our thoughts to God in Christ, as the Maker of it ; but when it is called a *Testament*, it carries an idea of its being made by Christ : And so if we consider it as a *covenant of promises*, which God made with his people in Christ, it was ratified by his blood, under the notion of a *Mediator* or *Surety* ; but if we consider it as a *testament* which Christ made, correspondent to God's covenant, it was ratified by his death, under the notion of a *testator*, that has bequeathed legacies to the heirs of salvation, and has made a declaration of his will with relation thereunto : And therefore, though considering it under the formal notion of a *testament* made by Christ, it needed no *Mediator* or *Surety* ; yet considering it under the formal notion of a *covenant* which God made with his people in and through Christ, it both needed and had a *Mediator*, as he is called, *chap. viii. 6.* or a *Surety*, as we have it in this place. (See the note on *chap. ix. 15.*)

shows that there was no imperfection and mutability in that state of the church.

14 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

24 But on the contrary, to assure us of the greater excellence and unchangeableness of the gospel-dispensation, this glorious person Jesus Christ, who was typified by *Melchisedec*, and was truly a man, but was God as well as man, that he might be a fit mediator between God and men, and a proper Surety to God for men; this divine man, of whom we are speaking, because he could not die out of his office, as merely mortal men did under the law, abides everlastingly in the execution of it, without any interruption by death, (see the note on *ver. 16.*); and so in his own single person has an immutable and never-failing priesthood, which cannot pass away from him to another; but which he continues to carry on at his Father's right hand in heaven, by appearing before him, as a lamb that had been slain, (*Rev. v. 6.*) and as a priest upon his throne. (*Zech. vi. 13.*)

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

25 It may therefore be solidly concluded from this, and from all that has been said before concerning Christ, as our great High Priest, that he has not only all divine ability originally in himself; but, in opposition to the weakness of the *Aaronical* priesthood, he has likewise all *office-power* \* and authority, which includes his *willingness*, to give complete deliverance from all sin and misery, fears and dangers, and to advance to all the glory and blessedness of the heavenly state, in the face of all opposition and difficulty, to the utmost extent of his office-power and merit; to the utmost of the wants, desires, hopes, and capacities for happiness; and to the utmost period of time, yea, even to the eternal salvation of all, that under a sense of their wants make their approaches to God in prayer, and other parts of gospel-worship, through him, for all seasonable relief on his account, as the only mediator, with faith in his name; since he lives for ever in heaven, not only as a divine person, and as clothed with human nature; but also as their great High Priest and Advocate, (who has a prevailing interest with God the Father) to make continual intercession

#### N O T E.

\* Christ's being able to save, relates, not to his absolute power as God, who, as such, is able to do all things, that does not imply a contradiction to the nature of things themselves, or to the perfections of his own nature: For though this divine power is fundamental to the ability here ascribed to him, yet it is his office-power, as God-man Mediator, that is here intended, as appears from his unchangeable priesthood mentioned

in the preceding verse, from whence his ability is inferred in this verse, for thus the connection stands, "Because he continues ever, he has an unchangeable priesthood, therefore he is able to save to the utmost;" &c. And this further appears from the proof that is given of his ability for this purpose, in the close of the verse, which is, "Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them."

cession for them, which he does in the presentation of his person, and of the merit of his sacrifice, and in a plea of right, (*Jobn xvii. 24.*) that all blessings may be given to them, according to the purchase of his blood, which he shed for the remission of their sins, and obtaining eternal redemption for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

26 For such an excellent, able, ever-living and perfect High Priest was fit and necessary for us; and it became the infinite wisdom and holiness of God to provide such an one for us, (*chap. ii. 10.*) who is not himself a sinner, as we are, and as all the high priests under the law were; but is unsportedly pure in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds, (*Luke i. 35. and Acts ii. 27. and 1 Peter ii. 22.*) inoffensive, (*ανανος*) innocent and blameless, no way injurious to any, and now raised above the reach of being hurt by any; never tainted with the least pollution in heart or life, nor defiled by means of other persons or things (as the legal priests often were) to interrupt him in the performance of his sacerdotal office, yea, was free from original sin, as having been born, not in a natural, or federal, way of union with *Adam*, like the rest of mankind; and he was removed to the furthest distance from all communion with sinners in any of their evil principles, ways or works; and \* far excels all the angels in holiness, as well as is now, in his exalted state, advanced to the highest authority and glory above them in the heaven of heavens, far beyond all other heavens. (*Ephes. iv. 10.*)

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the peoples: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

27 From hence it plainly appears that, being absolutely sinless, he had no occasion, as the high priests had under the law, to offer on every great day of atonement †, expiatory sacrifices, first for personal sins of his own, as they did for theirs, (*see Levit. v. 16.*) and then for the sins of his people, as they did for the sins of *Israel*; but with regard to the sins of his people, he did this, and finished it all at once, by way of complete atonement for them, when, *through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot to God*, (*chap. ix. 14.*) in opposition to the frequent offerings of sacrifices for the peoples sins under the law, and in opposition to those priests that had nothing of *their own*, and nothing better than *beasts and birds* to offer.

28 For

#### N O T E.

\* *The heavens*, by a common metonymy, is put for its inhabitants, (*See 1 Chron. xvi. 30, 31. Ps. xcvi. 11. and Isa. xlix. 13.*)

† *Daily*, (*καθ' ημεραν*) relates, I think, not to the daily offerings of the common priests, but to the annual offerings of the

high priest, at every return of the great day of atonement, for it is the office of the high priest that is here spoken of; and it was only on the anniversary day of atonement, from time to time, that they offered sacrifices for themselves and for the people.

23 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

28 For the law of a carnal commandment, (ver. 16.) by its constitution and appointment, ordered such to be consecrated to the high priest's office, as are merely mortal men, weak and dying creatures, and no better, (ver. 23.) ; yea, as are attended with *sinful*, as well as natural infirmities like other men ; and so needed to offer for their own sins, (ver. 27.) ; but the word which God spoke, and solemnly confirmed with his oath, and delivered in the sacred writings, (Ps. cx. 4.) many hundreds of years after the law was given by *Moses* ; this word invests the eternal Son of God himself with his priestly office, who is consecrated to it and perfected in it, (ΤΕΤΕΛΕΙΩΜΕΝΟΣ) as one that never had any moral defect to be a blemish upon his priesthood or sacrifice, or to require an offering for himself ; and who is now in his exalted state entirely free, even from all the natural infirmities of mankind, which he was attended with in this world, that he might be capable of dying as a sacrifice ; and so he is every way fit to discharge the remainder of his priesthood for perpetuity in his own person, as our great and only intercessor, without alteration or end till the whole design of it shall be perfectly accomplished, to the eternal salvation of the church, and of every individual member of it.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How transcendently excellent is the priesthood of Christ, as it is after the order of *Melchisedec*, and confirmed for ever by the oath of God himself ! and of what vast importance is it, that our faith be established herein ! The apostle thought it so, or else he would never have taken such abundant pains to illustrate and confirm it. *Melchisedec*, as an extraordinary priest of the most high God, blessed *Abraham*, who with *Levi*, as naturally and federally included in his loins, paid tithes to the superior priest. But how much more eminent a priest, as well as king of righteousness and peace, is the Son of God, than *Melchisedec* ! He was only in type what Christ is in reality, without beginning of days or end of life ; without any earthly father according to the flesh, and without any mother according to his divine nature ; and an eternal High Priest of such perpetual power and complete acceptance with his heavenly Father, according to the energy of his immortal life, as supercedes the want of any other to make atonement either for believing *Jews* or *Gentiles*. And how different from, and incomparably more excellent is his priesthood than that, which was appointed by the law of a carnal commandment ! He sprung, not from the tribe of *Levi*, but of *Judah*, which never had, by divine institution, any share in the high priest's office after the order of *Aaron*, who and his sons were merely mortal men, and in their turns died out of their office, and were succeeded by others of their line ; and they all had sins of their own to atone for, before they could offer a sacrifice for the sins of *Israel*. But Christ being holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, could have no occasion to offer any propitiatory sacrifice on his own account ; but, by offering up himself, he at once expiated the sins of his people : And as he never died out of his office ; so, being made higher than the heavens, he continually and completely exercises it alone by himself, without any predecessor or successor in it. This change of the priesthood naturally brought on an abolition of the law, to which it belonged, on account of the insufficiency of that law and priesthood to perfect the worship and happiness of the church ; and introduced the

the gospel-state, which depends upon, and derives the most substantial efficacy from the priesthood of Christ. How much better grounds of hope then have we in him, and in the gospel of the grace of God through him, than ever could have been had by the law! And with what humble confidence, and happy success, may the believing sinner now approach God in Christ! He is the Surety of the new covenant to undertake with God his Father, that all requirements should be answered in order to a secure accomplishment of its great and precious promises; and he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; since he ever lives as a righteous advocate, to make intercession for them.

## C H A P. VIII.

*The apostle, having finished his argument drawn from the comparison of the priesthood of Melchisedec with that of Aaron, shews that his main design therein was to demonstrate the excellency of Christ's priesthood above that of Aaron, which he adds still further light to, by comparing him with, and preferring him to, the high priests under the law, with respect to the place where he officiates, the sacrifice he offers, and the covenant of which he is the Mediator, 1.—6. And he goes by way of digression, into a representation of the great excellence of this covenant above the former, which is now abolished.*

## TEXT.

NOW of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW what I have chiefly in view, in all that has been so largely insisted on, in the comparison between Aaron and Melchisedec, who was a most eminent type of Christ †, may be summed up in this; We, of the New Testament-church, have such a great and glorious High Priest in the person of our Lord Jesus, as incomparably excels all others, and particularly all the priests of the Aaronical order; as further appears from the place, where he officiates, who having made atonement for sin by the sacrifice of himself, which he offered upon earth, is now exalted in his human nature, and perpetually abides in the highest dignity and authority for the completing of his office, and securing the application of the benefits of his purchase, as he appears in the immediate presence of the divine majesty, which may be figuratively expressed by his being seated on the most honourable side (as the right hand is deemed to be) of God the Father's most illustrious display of his glory, as on his magnificent throne in the highest heaven. (See the note on Acts vii. 55.)

a Minister of the sanctuary, and of

2 And, notwithstanding his glorious exaltation at the Father's right hand, he condescends to appear and act in his priestly character, as a public minister, officiating

## NOTE.

† The word (κεφαλαιον) here rendered the sum, signifies either, a brief summary, or the chief thing.



of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

ciating towards, and before God for us about sacred things; not in the earthly sanctuary, or Judaic holy of holies, which he never entered into, but the true holy of holies, in the habitation of God's most eminent glory, even heaven itself, which is called, with emphatical peculiarity, *his sanctuary*, (Pl. cii. 19.) and was typified by that on earth; nor does our blessed Lord minister in the shadowy earthly tabernacle, in which he never officiated as a priest, but in the true substantial tabernacle of his human nature, of which *that* was a type or figure: and (<sup>u</sup>) which was formed by the immediate power of God, as exerted in the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost upon the virgin *Mary*. (Luke i. 35.) † and was not erected by human aid or assistance, as that tabernacle was in which the legal priests ministered, and which was prepared, set up, and fastened with stakes and cords by the hands of men. And since both the *sanctuary* and *tabernacle*, in which Christ now carries on his priestly office, are more excellent than any that preceded them, we may assuredly conclude, that *the sacrifice*, which he, as a high priest, presents to God therein, must needs be so too.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices:

3 For the special business of every high priest, for which he is appointed and authorized of God, is to present oblations and sacrifices of atonement, which had been slain and offered, *before* he carried their blood into the

#### N O T E.

† Some understand the *tabernacle*, of which Christ is said to be the minister, as signifying the *universal church*, for whose benefit, it must be allowed, he officiates as their great High Priest. But he doth not officiate in, or by them, as the means of his heavenly ministration, which seems to be what the apostle here intends, in allusion to the Jewish tabernacle, in which, and by means of which, the ancient priests performed their holy ministrations. Others take the *tabernacle* to signify the same with the *sanctuary*, even heaven itself: But this too much carries the face of a needless tautology: *since* and (*καὶ*) here cannot be exegetical because the article (*τῆς*) follows it. I therefore rather apprehend that the *sanctuary* and *tabernacle* may be considered with a distinction of one from the other; as the first alludes to the most holy place, which was a figure of heaven; and the second alludes to the whole of that sacred edifice which was erected under the law. And as God dwelt in the tabernacle with visible emblems of his glory, which filled the house, as it afterwards did the temple, (Ex. xl. 34, 35. compared with 1 Kings viii. 10, 11.) so that ta-

bernacle may very properly be regarded as a type of the body or human nature of Christ; for the human body is called a tabernacle, 2 Cor. v. 1. and 2 Pet. i. 14; and our Lord in his incarnation *dwelt*, or *tabernacled* (*ἐσχεν*) amongst us, (John i. 14) and spoke of his own body as a temple, in allusion to the Jewish temple, which in its use succeeded the tabernacle, John ii. 19, 21; we are also told, that *in him*, as in his tabernacle, “dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily,” (Col. ii. 9.) And as the tabernacle was set up only for a time, to be pulled down on occasion, and then erected again, (Num. i. 51. and x. 21.) so was the body of our Lord in his death and resurrection. We may also further observe, that the *sanctuary*, though expressed by a plural noun, (*τὰς ἀγίας*) signifies “the body” “liet of all, or the holy place,” as it is rendered, chap. ix. 8, 12, 15. and *that* is the sense which I take to be most directly intended here: And yet as it also signifies *holy things*, and as Christ’s ministering in his priestly office is about such things, it might not be amiss to suggest that thought also.

fees: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

the holy place, and in order to his doing so<sup>\*</sup>; it was therefore absolutely necessary, that, to answer that character, this great gospel High Priest, (τὸν) of whom we are speaking, should also have a sacrifice to offer, suitable to his dignity, as God-man, and to the glorious state and place of his present ministration; and that he should present it in the heavenly sanctuary before the throne of God, as the ancient typical high priest did the blood of the legal sacrifices before the mercy-seat in the most holy place.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

4 For if he were to have continued only upon earth, he could not have officiated, as a high priest, in that most glorious part of his office which was to be performed in the *sanctuary*; since there are high priests of *Aaron's* order, that present sacrifices in the *Jewish* holy of holies, according to God's institution of that office under the law; which admits of no priest of any other tribe, and consequently not of Christ, who was of the tribe of *Judah*, to be joined with them. (See the note on chap. vii. 13.)

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see

5 Who minister in that tabernacle, and do the service of it, which was a typical draught and shadowy representation of the true tabernacle †, in which our blessed Lord now officiates in heaven, as an intercessory High Priest; intimations of which were given by God to *Moses*, when he received divine orders of what he should do in framing and finishing that earthly tabernacle:

#### N O T E S.

\* The true key, as I take it, of the apostle's argument in this and the two following verses, is, that in allusion to the office of the high priest under the law, who was to kill and offer the sacrifices on the great day of atonement, before he entered, and carried their blood into the holy place within the veil, as was expressly ordered, (Lev. xvi. 5.—15.) Christ offered the sacrifice of himself in his death, before he entered into heaven with his own blood, to present the virtue of it before the throne of grace, and, as it were, to sprinkle it on the throne, (which was typified by the mercy-seat,) for rendering it effectual unto all the great and blessed purposes for which it had been shed, and offered in a sacrificial way on the cross: For this was a necessary part of the service, which belonged to the offering, in order to its fully answering its end, and seems to me to be here principally intended; rather than the offering of the atoning sacrifice itself on the brazen altar, which was finished by the high priest before he entered with its blood into the sanctuary, as Christ's also was on the cross, when through the eternal Spirit he

offered himself without spot to God before he entered into heaven: And therefore it would have been inconsistent with the nature of Christ's priesthood for him to have continued on earth, as the apostle argues in the next verse: because the *sanctuary*, in which his ministry as a high priest was to be finished, according to the typical meaning of the holy of holies, is *heaven itself*. This I humbly conceive sets the whole discourse on this head in a much clearer, easier, and more harmonious light, than I could ever gather from the numerous perplexed accounts that have been given of it.

† The difficulty of this verse is so great, and the various interpretations of it, by all the commentators I have seen, are so obscure and unsatisfying, that I have humbly attempted to give what seem to me to be the most easy and intelligible account of it, in consistence with Mr. Pierce's criticisms on some of the words, which they that are so minded may consult; and which indeed settled my thoughts to this sense, though it be mostly different from his, and from all others that I have met with.

see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

nacle. For when he was going about that work, God said to him, (*Ex. xiv. 40.*) Be very careful and exact in your superintendency and directions for making every, even the most minute part of the tabernacle, in which I will dwell, without the least variation from, but just according to that model, which was plainly drawn out to your view in the vision I gave you of it in the mount; which model, as it was of heavenly original, exactly answerable to the idea of it in the mind of God, was also a typical platform of the inhabitation of the deity in the tabernacle of Christ's human nature, in which he ministers in the heavenly sanctuary.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

6 And (so) now our blessed Lord, in his exalted state, has evidently obtained, by a singular appointment and call of God his Father, and accordingly is now actually engaged in, a far more excellent, honourable, and beneficial office of ministrations, than all that ever was exercised before him under the old covenant-dispensation; as on many other accounts, that have been already insisted on at large, (*ver. 1,—5. and chap. vii.*) so in proportion to the incomparably greater excellence and advantage of the *new covenant-dispensation*, (*ver. 8.*) \* of which he is the only mediator, for taking away all

#### N O T E.

\* For understanding this and all the following verses to the end of the chapter, in confirmation of what is here asserted concerning Christ, as the Mediator of a better covenant, which is also called a *new covenant*, *ver. 8, 13.* It is necessary to consider what that first covenant was, which this better and new covenant is preferred to. It doubtless was the covenant which God made with Israel at mount Sinai, as appears from *ver. 9.* where it is called "the covenant that he made with their fathers, when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt." This (taking it altogether) was not merely the covenant of works, as containing terms of acceptance with God to eternal life: For God never did, nor could accept sinful creatures to eternal life upon the foot of that broken covenant. Nor was it merely the covenant of grace: For Christ was always the Mediator of the covenant of grace; and its promises were always, for substance the same; and so he could not be said, by way of distinction, to be the Mediator of an absolutely better covenant; nor could it be said to be established on better promises than that. I therefore apprehend that it was a "temporary covenant of peculiarity" with the Jews, which, considered barely as a covenant between God and them, as he was their political king, and they were his national subjects, related only

to the temporal blessings of this life, and prosperity in the land of Canaan; and so was delivered to that nation, as a body politic, under the form of a covenant of works, upon the fulfilling of which they were to inherit the blessings of that land. But considering it as a covenant which God made with the church of Israel, as their God, relating to their spiritual and eternal concerns, it contained a representation both of the original covenant of works, which they as sinners had broke, and could not keep; and of the covenant of grace, which provided for their pardon and justification. It set forth the original covenant of works, as the substance of that covenant was represented in the law of the ten commandments; and as the form of it was drawn out in declarations, that "if a man did the things contained therein, he should live by them," (*Lev. xviii. 5.*) This was not only the condition of the covenant, as it related to temporal blessings, but was likewise a draught of the original covenant of works, relating to spiritual blessings, as appears from the apostle's mentioning this tenor of it, with a reference to the Gentiles, who never were under the Sinai-covenant, (*Rom. x. 5. and Gal. iii. 10, 12.*) and from his speaking of Gentile-believers being delivered from its curse, by Christ's being made a curse for them, (*Gal. iii. 13.*) Now the design of God

all manner of difference between God and his people, and purchasing all its spiritual and eternal blessings for them by the sacrifice of himself; and for ratifying it by his blood, as also for securing the accomplishment of all its promises, and enabling them to accept of it, and yield themselves to God according to it: This is a covenant which was formed into an authoritative establishment (*καταστέλλεται*) upon more spiritual, advantageous and heavenly, extensive, and absolute promises, (*ver. 10, 11, 12.*) than what were contained in the former legal administration of it at mount Sinai, (*ver. 9.*)

And

#### N O T E.

God in thus including the covenant of works, in the law given to Israel, might be to lay before them a perfect rule of righteousness, and to shew them the necessity of a sinless conformity to it, in order to their obtaining justification in his sight by their own works; and, consequently, to convince them of their sin and danger, as they were transgressors of this original law; of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life by their own obedience to it; and of the necessity of an atonement for sin, and of a better righteousness than their own to justify them before God; and so it was subservient to the intimations that were given in the Mosaic dispensation of the covenant of grace. Accordingly the Sinai-covenant included also a representation of the covenant of grace, as the promises of a Saviour made to Adam immediately upon the fall, and afterwards, with further enlargements to Abraham, were not disannulled, or rendered ineffectual by the Mosaic law, (*Gal. iii. 17.*) and as the various sacrifices, washings, and purifications, by blood and water, were appointed in the Sinai-covenant itself, to prefigure Christ, and point the church of Israel to him for cleansing from the guilt of sin by his atoning blood, and for receiving grace by his sanctifying Spirit. And God all along dealt with the believing Israelites according to, and saved them by this covenant, in virtue of the promise of the "seed of the woman" "that should bruise the serpent's head, and" "of the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed," which promises still subsisted, and ran through the Mosaic dispensation, as a ground of faith in the grace of God, through the promised Messiah, for eternal life; though the carnal Jews turned the whole of that dispensation into a covenant of works, and sought righteousness for justification to life by their own obedience to it; and so fell short of Christ and salvation by him, as the apostle tells us, *Rom. ix. 31, 33.*—Now taking the Sinai-covenant alone, and by itself, as made between God and Israel under the strict no-

tion of his being their political king; and taking it as containing a plan of the original covenant of works: the covenant of grace, under the gospel-dispensation, was "entirely a new covenant, established upon better promises," relating to the heavenly inheritance, in opposition to both those considerations of the Sinai-covenant, in which it is spoken of as the *first and old covenant*, (*ver. 7. 13.*) But taking it in its greater latitude, with all its appendages, as including the whole of the Mosaic dispensation, with a reference to Israel's spiritual and eternal concerns; the covenant of grace, under the gospel-dispensation of it, may be called a "new covenant, established on better promises," not indeed *absolutely*, but in *certain respects*; because the light, liberty, and grace contained herein, are more clearly, expressly, and abundantly promised in this, than they ever were before in that former dispensation of it; and because of the more spiritual ordinances of worship that are contained in this, than were in that: For as the law of love is called a *new commandment*, (*John xiii. 34.*) not *absolutely* a new one, since it was, for substance, contained in the Decalogue, and other parts of the Old Testament many ages before; but a *new commandment*, with respect to the new explanations, motives, and enforcements, &c. with which our Lord delivered it. (See the paraphrase and note on *John xiii. 34.*) So the Sinai-covenant, in the whole compass of it, may be called "the covenant of grace," clothed with the darkness and terror of "the legal dispensation;" and, in distinction from it, "a clear, disencumbered, spiritual, and glorious edition and enlargement of it," under the gospel-dispensation, may be called a *new and better covenant*: And that is the view in which I have chiefly considered them in this and the following verses: for unless we suppose the first covenant to have a relation to spiritual benefits in this argument, it loses its propriety and force.

And that *this* is a better and more perfect covenant than *that*; is evident.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

7 For if the former Sinai covenant had been free from all defects, as to its establishment, light, grace, and efficacy, for perfecting the state of the church, which indeed it never was designed for, how good soever it was in itself, and how fit soever to answer its particular ends, which it was undoubtedly well suited to, as God himself was the author of it: If, I say, it had not been insufficient to answer all the ends of his grace towards his people in their church-state upon earth, which is to issue in their perfection in heaven, then there certainly would have been no occasion for the wisdom of God to have contrived, nor for his people to have desired, another more spiritual and complete administration of the covenant of grace upon earth; nor would there have been any room for introducing it under the gospel-state, as it is plain there was.

8 For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, (saith the Lord,) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;

8 For God having accused and reproved the *Jews*, by the prophet *Jeremiah*, (chap. xxxi. 31, &c.) for their transgressions of that covenant, which indeed did not secure their obedience, he says, Observe with attention, wonder and joy, the days are coming and hastening apace, (*ἡμέραι ἐρχόμεναι*) says the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, even the days of the Messiah, whom ye expect to come; when I will assuredly set up and finish (*συντελέσω*) a new covenant-dispensation of free and absolute promises; and I will establish it irrevocably and unalterably with my people, both with those that are among the ten tribes of *Israel*, and with those of the house of *Judah*, including that of *Benjamin*, who all in their turns have shamefully violated my present covenant with them: And I will make it, not with them only, that belong to either of these tribes; but with all my spiritual *Israel*, who were typified by them\*; and who, under the gospel-state, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, shall be called the *Israel of God*. (Gal. vi. 16.)

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took

9 This new covenant shall not be weak and ineffectual, according to the tenor of that covenant of peculiarity, which I entered into with *Israel's* natural and covenant-ancestors, at the time when, with all the tenderness, care, and condescension of a father, I, as it were, led

#### N O T E.

\* That "the true Israel of God," of what nation soever, are to be included under these characters, or descriptions of *Israel* and *Judah*, appears; because the persons here intended are those to whom God absolutely promised, that he would actually and effica-

ciously extend his renewing and pardoning grace, ver. 10, 11, 12. which cannot be said of the whole body of *Israel* after the flesh, much less of every one of them; but holds good as to all the spiritual *Israel*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and to none but them.

took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

led them, like weak and helpless children, by the hand, to deliver them, in the greatness of my power and mercy, out of all the oppressions, miseries, and slavery, under which they were in sore bondage in the land of Egypt. This new covenant, I say, shall not be of the same strain and constitution with that; because through the treachery of their own hearts, which that covenant of peculiarity, as such, did not absolutely provide against, they were not stedfast in it; but despised and made it void by breaking through all its sacred bonds; and I thereupon withdrew my favour and protection from them, and did not regard them, according to the tenor of that covenant, with the love, care, and tenderness of a husband † any more; as, in case of their disobedience, I had given them reason to expect that I would not, says the Lord Jehovah, who, being highly provoked by their unfaithful behaviour, justly rejected them.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

10 This new covenant shall be of a much better and surer tenor than that: For this is the sum and substance of the covenant, which I, of my own mere grace, will make with all my spiritual *Israel*, first of the *Jews*, and then of the *Gentiles*, under the gospel-state, after the Old Testament-dispensation shall cease, says the great Jehovah; I will enlighten and renew their understandings, that they may behold the spirituality, purity and extent of the moral law, by an inward operation upon their minds; and will give them a plain insight into the doctrine of salvation by the Messiah\*: And I will not only set these things with the clearest and strongest evidence before their minds; but will furthermore make a thorough change upon their wills, affections, and all the practical powers of their souls, by engraving them, not (as I did the law of the ten commandments) by a miraculous impression on tables of stone; but by a supernatural gracious operation of my Spirit, who shall write them in the *fleshy tables of their hearts*, (2 Cor. iii. 3.) to guide and govern them in all their ways: And, according to this new and better covenant, I will be an all-sufficient God, in a way of

#### N O T E S.

† What is here rendered, "I regarded them not," as it lies in the translation of the *Septuagint*, is rendered from the Hebrew, in Jer. xxxi. 32. the place here quoted, "Though I was an husband to them." But as the sense is much the same, according to the view I have given of it; so Dr Pocock has learnedly shown that the Hebrew word (נָזַר) signifies both to govern and to be a bus-

band, and to neglect, despise, and refuse. (see his *Misael*. chap. i.)

\* By his laws we may understand primarily the moral law; but not to the exclusion of the wider sense of the word, in which it is sometimes taken, to signify any doctrine of divine revelation which God requires us to receive with the obedience of faith. (See the note on Rom. iii. 27.)

of protection, favour, and blessing, to them; and will own them, and perform all things for them, as their God: And they shall be inclined and enabled, by my grace, to answer their obligations to me, in a way of faith and love, duty and obedience, and of owing me in a becoming profession of my name, as my peculiar covenant-people; and so I will take effectual care that this my covenant be not liable to be made void on their part, any more than on my own, as the first covenant was.

10 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

11 And the light and energy of this supernatural illumination of their minds, and of this writing my laws in their hearts, shall be so clear, extensive, and powerful in all important points, that, comparatively speaking, none of them shall have like occasion, as there was under the former dark dispensation, to explain them one to another, merely by the typical and shadowy representations therein made of them; much less shall they depend upon, and rest in *external* teachings, as many of the *Jews* have done, and that according to the corrupt notions of their *Rabbies*\*: They shall have no need, after this manner, to say, each of them to his neighbour and acquaintance, or to his kindred according to the flesh, or brother in a religious relation, Follow my instructions to bring you to the knowledge of Christ and of God in him: For all *Sion's* children shall be efficaciously taught by my Spirit, (*Is. liv. 13.* and *John vi. 45.*) that they may experimentally, believably, affectionately, and practically know me for themselves, according to the plain revelation I shall make of my perfections, counsels, and will, and of the way of salvation through the Messiah, in the gospel, whether they be the weakest or the strongest believers, or whatsoever difference there may be among them, as to the degrees of their knowledge of me.

12 For I will be merciful

12 For, that there may be no obstruction to the free communications of my grace, and performance of my covenant-

#### N O T E.

\* We are not to suppose that "they shall not teach every man," &c. is designed to exclude all public and private, ministerial, family, and social instruction; for this is founded on the law of nature, and is enforced in the New Testament-institution of a gospel-ministry to continue to the consummation of all things, (*Mat. xxviii. 2.* and *Ephes. iv. 12, 13*) and in the obligation that it has laid upon "Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (*Ephes. vi. 4.*) as also in the directions that are given in

this very epistle, (*chap. iii. 13.* and *x. 24, 25.*) to private Christians, to "exhort one another daily," &c. This passage therefore must be taken, either in a comparative sense, as such expressions often are; (*See Isa. xliii. 16.* *Jer. xxiii. 16.* *Mat. ix. 13.*) Or else with reference to that manner of teaching which was used, and rested in under the obscurities of the Old Testament-dispensation, and the corrupt interpretations of the Jewish doctors; or both may be included.

merciful to their  
weaknesses and  
their sins and  
their iniquities  
will I remember  
no more.

covenant-promises to them, (*ἰδοὺ ἱουμαὶ ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν*) I will mercifully pardon their unrighteous deeds thro' faith in Christ's propitiation, (*ἱλαστήριον*); Rom. iii. 25.) and as to all their sinful swervings from my commandments, (*ἀμαρτίαν*) and their departures from the rule of duty, and the chief end of life; and all their discor-  
formities to, and transgressions of my law, (*ἀνομίαι*) I, whose prerogative and glory it is to *forgive iniquity, and transgression, and sin*, (Ex. xxxiv. 7.) even I, will as entirely pardon them, as if I had quite forgot them; and will never call them to mind, so as to proceed in judgment to condemn these my covenant-ones for them; but will thoroughly *blot them all out, and cast them be-  
hind my back, and as into the depths of the sea*, (11. xxxviii. 17. and xlv. 22. and Micah vii. 19.) that they, like crimes forgotten, as well as forgiven, may never be brought to remembrance; as under the legal dispensation the sins of Israel were every year, (*chap. x. 3.*) nor they be upbraided with them any more.

12 In that he  
faith. A new cove-  
nant, he hath made  
the first old. Now  
that which de-  
cayeth, and wax-  
eth old, is ready  
to vanish away.

13 Now, to wind up this important article, 'Tis evi-  
dent from all this, that as God promised to make with  
his people what he calls (*ver. 8.*) a *new covenant*, of  
this happy, secure, free and absolute tenor, with rela-  
tion to spiritual and eternal blessings, in a better admi-  
nistration under the gospel-state than that which pre-  
ceded it, he thereby intimates the weakness and unpro-  
fitableness of the *Mosaic* dispensation, (*chap. vii. 18.*)  
and its being to be set aside and disannulled, as an an-  
tiquated thing, quite out of date: And as whatsoever  
is wearing out through infirmity, or is coming to a  
dissolution through age, like persons and garments, or  
any other things, that grow old, and past service, is  
very near unto actually expiring, or ceasing to be  
of any further use; so that dispensation, with all its  
rites, ceremonies, and institutions, will very soon be  
totally abolished, and put, as it were, out of sight;  
(*ὥστε ἀφανισθῆναι*) when, according to our Lord's predic-  
tion, (*Mat. xxiv. 1, 2.*) the temple at *Jerusalem*, on  
which the principal part of the *Jewish* worship and or-  
dinances depended, will be utterly destroyed, the time  
of which is now just at hand.

## RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious is the Lord Jesus Christ in his present ministration, as our great  
High Priest! He continues to exercise this office, in the tabernacle of his mira-  
culously formed human body, at the right hand of God the Father in the hea-  
venly sanctuary; and there presents the merit of his atoning sacrifice in his inter-  
cession. How necessary for us, as well as honourable to him, was his entering  
into the holiest of all, to fulfil that important part of his office! This could not  
have been finished by his continuing on earth; because there were *Aaronical*  
priests,



priests, which order he was not of, but superior to; and none but those of that order could legally officiate in the earthly sanctuary; and heaven itself was the only proper place for him to appear in for this purpose. And how much more excellent is his sacrifice, than all the offerings of former high priests, as to its dignity, and the sanctuary in which it is presented to God! They were mere shadows of what is done by Christ; but the perfection and glory of all is accomplished in him, as the Mediator of the new covenant.—How close should we keep to divine revelation in every thing that pertains to the service of God! As *Moses* was to make all things, relating to the tabernacle, exactly according to the pattern which God had shewn him in the mount; so all our worship is to be according to *institution*, without any addition, alteration, or abatement.—How much better is the gospel-dispensation of the covenant of grace, than that which was made with *Israel* at mount *Sinai*! It has a better Mediator, and stands on the foot of better promises. Though that covenant was defective in its securities, and was broken by *Israel*, after God had wrought wonders of mercy in delivering them out of *Egypt*, and he thereupon at length cast them off as a people, to whom, by that covenant, he would no longer be a husband; yet, blessed be his holy name, he hath made with his spiritual *Israel* of all nations, under the gospel-state, a new covenant, which is perfect in its nature, and every way suited to secure its gracious design. It contains rich and free, clear, express, and absolute promises of a spiritual relation to God, as the God of his people, to be their portion, and to engage their love and duty to him; and promises of mercy to forgive all their iniquities, and never to remember any of their sins against them; and to lead them into a plain and saving acquaintance with himself in Christ, to write his law and gospel in their hearts, and to preserve them from utter apostacy. O the happiness and safety of the least as well as of the most eminent of those, that are in covenant with God, who has thus graciously undertaken for himself and them! O blessed tenor of this pure unmixed dispensation of the new covenant! How unchangeable and perpetual is it! It shall never wax old or vanish away, like the *Sinai*-covenant; but shall abide in full force, virtue, and vigour, as the last and most perfect administration of it in this world; and shall remain, till it issue in the everlasting happiness of all the heirs of promise in the world to come.

## C H A P. IX.

*The apostle, returning to his main argument, gives an account of the Jewish tabernacle and its utensils, 1,—5. Shows their use and meaning, as to their figurative services and sacrifices, 6,—10. Explains their accomplishment in Christ, 11,—22; and infers the necessity, superior dignity and efficacy of his priesthood and sacrifice, in an application of what he had said about those that belonged to the tabernacle under the law, 23,—28.*

## TEXT.

Thence verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

## PARAPHRASE.

TO return then to what we have been saying about the earthly and heavenly tabernacle and sanctuary, (*chap. viii. 1,—5.*) There did indeed belong even to the *Mosaic* dispensation of the covenant, (which has been called but now (*chap. viii. 13.*) *the first covenant* \*) various

## N O T E.

\* Many Greek copies read (*πρῶτη ἐκκλησία*) the first tabernacle; but that seems to make

a tautology in this and the beginning of the next verse; I therefore chuse to keep to our, and

various typical ordinances of God's appointment for religious worship; and a sacred magnificent tent or tabernacle, which, inclusive of the whole fabric, may be stiled in a lax sense the sanctuary for the celebration of those ordinances: And which was made of earthly materials by the hands of men; and, exclusive of its figurative meaning, was of a worldly nature, as well as that its station was in this world †, in opposition to that which is heavenly, (whertof we shall afterwards speak, *ver. 6, &c.*)

1 For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

2 For, suitable to the nature and design of that carnal dispensation, there was an earthly tabernacle ‡ prepared and built, according to the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount, (*chap. viii. 5.*) which consisted of two principal parts, as the temple also afterwards did. In one part was the candlestick \* with burning lamps of oil; which might prefigure the fulness of spiritual light that is in Christ, to be communicated by his Spirit, in the administration of gospel-ordinances to the church, (in which God dwells, as in his spiritual temple or tabernacle) according to the measure of the gift of Christ, (*Ephes. iv. 7.*) who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and has seven stars in his right hand: (*Rev. i. 12, 13, 16, 20. and iv. 5.*) And there was in this court of the tabernacle the table and the shewbread || upon it; which may point us to the communion

#### NOTES.

and many other ancient versions, which properly enough supply the word *covenant*, referring back to the last verse of the preceding chapter, which speaks of the *first covenant* (*xepome*) being made old, as is manifestly intended, though the word *covenant* be not there expressed in the Greek; and here it is shown what were the ordinances pertaining to that covenant. The curious reader may consult Dr Owen on this side, and Dr Whitby on the other side of the question about it.

† This building was of an oblong square figure of thirty cubits, or (reckoning each cubit to be a foot and a half) forty-five feet in length, and ten cubits, or fifteen feet in breadth, and the same in height. But it is thought by many, that these cubits were two or three inches longer than ours. (*See Universal History*, vol. I. p. 651. fol.)

‡ The *sanctuary*, *ver. 1.* and the *tabernacle* in the beginning of this verse, apparently mean the same thing; these terms being often used promiscuously, one for the other; and they are both to be understood here, as taking in the whole of that sacred edifice, which bears the name of the *tabernacle*, *ver. 8.* and *chap. viii. 5.* though at

other times they are used variously, and the sanctuary may signify only one part of it, and the tabernacle another, as in the last clause of this verse, and *ver. 3.*

\* The weight of this candlestick was a talent of beaten gold all of a piece; out of its shaft or shank proceeded six branches, three on each side, and a seventh in the middle; on the top of every one of them was a lamp, into all of which was put pure oil of olives, with a wick or piece of cotton for burning; and they were trimmed and recruited, by the priest in waiting, every morning and evening. (*See Exod. xxv. 31.—39. and xxvii. 20.*)

|| This table was made of shittim wood which some suppose to have been mahogany because no tree was so likely as this, to afford such vast boards of ten cubits long, and cubit and a half broad, as were cut out of this wood for the tabernacle, (*Ex. xxxv. 20, 21.*) and abundance of mahogany trees are said to grow not far from those parts. The table, we are speaking of, was two cubits, or three feet in length, and one cubit, or a foot and half in breadth, and a cubit and half, or two feet three inches in height, and was covered over with pure gold, which had a sort of ogee, or an edge of a table

nion that believers have with God in Christ, and the provision he has made for them in him, as the bread of life. (*John* vi. 35, 51.) These were some of the chief furniture that was placed in, and peculiar to the services of, this *first* part of the tabernacle; which was called the *sanctuary* or *holy place*, (*Ex.* xxvi. 32.) as it was consecrated to the honour and worship of God, and sanctified by his presence; and was the ordinary court, in which the priests officiated about holy things.

5 And the *second* part of this sacred edifice lay toward the west, beyond the second veil, which hung down, like a large curtain of curious workmanship, to separate between that and the first court, (*Ex.* xxvi. 31,—35.); and is called, by way of eminence, *the holy of holies*, as being the most holy place of all; because there God manifested himself in the most illustrious emblems of glory, and the high priest only might enter into it with the blood of the sacrifices, and officiate there, and *that* only once a-year on the great day of atonement: Which was typical of heaven, and of our great High Priest's entering into it, through the veil of his flesh, with his own blood, to make intercession for us. (*ver.* 12. and *chap.* x. 20.)

4 And the sacred utensils, which belonged to the *holiest of all*, were these. One of them was the altar of incense \*, that was overlaid with fine gold, from which the high priest on the great atonement day, having taken *the golden censer*, and fire from the altar of burnt-

## N O T E S.

golden border, round about the top, something like our tea-boards, and stood on four feet. (*Ex.* xxv. 13,—16.) The shew bread, which was probably so called, because it stood continually, as it were, before the face of the Lord in the holy place, was made of the finest wheat into loaves or cakes, each of which was to contain two tenth deals, which made about three wine pints of flower; twelve of which loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, were placed upon the table in two rows, or *sets in order*, (*מסוד*) six one upon another, in each row; and fresh loaves were set there every sabbath day, when the priest took the old ones away, of which, by the law, none but Aaron and his sons were to eat. (*Lev.* xxiv. 5,—9 compared with *Mat.* xii. 4.)

\* Some have supposed that the golden censer was kept in the holy of holies, just within the veil, by the turning aside of which the high priest took it to burn incense before the Lord on the anniversary day of atonement; and that the other censers for the common use of the priests were of

silver: But others observe that the golden censer (*זבחת-עוֹלָה*) may signify *the altar of incense*, which was overlaid with gold. And I am inclined to think, with them, that it is so to be understood here; chiefly, because there is otherwise no mention at all of this grand utensil of the tabernacle: And tho' it stood in the court of the priests for their daily use, as well as the candlestick and the table with the shew-bread; yet as the apostle's principal view in the present discourse is to compare these things with Christ, that most immediately relate to the high priest; and the golden altar of incense, which stood just before the veil, was of necessary and important use in the high priest's ministration on the expiation-day, (*Lev.* xvi. 12, 13.) He therefore may be supposed to reckon it among the things that pertained to the immediate service of the most holy place; but does not say, as he doth of all the following particulars, that it was in the holiest of all, only that the holiest of all *had it* (*עָלָיו*) with respect to use, though not to situation.

bout with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.

burnt-offering, and then, having filled his hands with the incense, directly entered into the most holy place; and, putting the incense upon the fire, a cloud ascended from it, and covered the mercy-seat, (*Lev. xvi. 12, 13.*) which might signify the extreme sufferings and fragrant intercession of Christ: and in the holy of holies itself was a small chest of shittim wood, covered over within and without with pure gold; the length of which was two cubits and a half, or three feet nine inches; and the breadth one cubit and a half, or two feet three inches; and its height the same, (*Ex. xxxvii. 1, 2.*) And this was called the *ark of the covenant*, and of the *testimony*, (*Ex. xxv. 16. and xi. 3, 5.*) as it was a symbol of God's covenant with *Israel*, and a witness for or against them, according to their obedience or disobedience to the law that was kept therein; and may be considered as directing them to Christ, who came to fulfil the law, and is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes, (*Mat. v. 17. and Rom. x. 4.*) Hard by the ark† was placed the *golden pot*, containing a parcel of the *manna*, with which God fed *Israel* in the wilderness; and which, according to divine order, (*Ex. xvi. 33, 34.*) was miraculously kept from putrefaction, as a perpetual memorial before the Lord in the sanctuary, and was typical of Christ, the true and ever-living bread. (*John vi. 48,—51.*) There was also Aaron's miraculous rod, with which he and Moses wrought many wonders, and which, though a dry stick, budded, blossomed, and brought forth almonds all in one night, to shew that God had chosen the house of Aaron to the priesthood, in preference to all others; and it was afterwards preserved, by no less a miracle, in its flourishing state before the ark of the testimony, for a continual memorial: (*Numb. xvii.*

2.—

## N O T E.

† It is expressly said, *1 Kings viii. 9.* "There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb;" and it is no small difficulty to reconcile this with our apostles saying, "Wherein, (if he meant in the ark) was the golden-pot, that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." The most common way has been to suppose that, as the preposition (*in*) rendered *in*, sometimes also signifies *by*, answerable to *beb* in the Hebrew, "the pot of manna and Aaron's rod" were put, not *into*, but *by* the ark in a casket adjoining to it. (See *Deut. xxxi. 26. and 1 Sam. vi. 8.*) Accordingly the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were said to be laid

before the testimony, and before the ark, (*Ex. xvi. 34. and Numb. xvii. 10.*) But as here is but one preposition, and that goes immediately before the golden pot, &c. Others think it to be a forced construction to make it signify *by* with relation to the golden pot, and Aaron's rod, and *in*, with relation to the tables of the covenant, which were certainly in the ark itself: And therefore they apprehend, which I think will solve the difficulty, that *wherein* refers not to the ark, but to that part of the tabernacle (*σκήνη*) which is called just before (*ver. 3.*) the holiest of all, (*ver. 4.*) in which tabernacle all these utensils were placed. As this Pierce supposes the golden altar also was.

2,—10.) In correspondence hereunto, Christ came forth, not without the most extraordinary miracle in his conception, as a *rod out of the withered stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots, and as a root out of a dry ground*, (Is. xi. 1. and liii. 2.) ; and God has manifested him to be our only gospel High Priest, whose office shall ever remain in a prosperous state. And there were in the ark itself the two tables of the moral law, consisting of the ten commandments, which the Lord wrote on the two tables of stone, that were cut out by *Moses*, (Deut. x. 1, 2.) and contained the covenant, to which all its other articles related, that God made with *Israel* in *Horeb*, (Deut. v. 1,—12. and 27,—33.) and these being put into the ark might intimate, that the moral law should ever continue to be an unchangeable rule of all holy obedience in the hands of Christ ; and should be fulfilled by him, as a covenant, for the justification of all that believe in him, (Mat. v. 17, 18. and Rom. x. 4.)

† And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat ; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

5 And over or above this ark are two stately figures called cherubim \*, of a glorious winged form, made of pure gold, which represented holy angels ; and one of them with one, and the other with another of his wings, that met together in the middle, overspread the whole top of the mercy-seat at some height above it ; the cherubim being placed at each end, and beaten out of the same mass of fine gold with the mercy-seat itself, which was an oblong square plate of solid gold, exactly fitted in length and breadth to the dimensions of the ark, and laid upon it as a lid or covering to it ; and altogether made a representation of a magnificent throne, on which God appeared in the *Shechinah*, (an illustrious emblem of the divine glory) as dwelling between the cherubim, and shining forth from thence ; (Ps. lxxx. 1.) and as meeting and communion with *Moses*, and giving forth his holy oracles from off the mercy-seat. (Ex. xxv. 22. and Numb. vii. 89.) † Answerable hereunto, God, who is attended with angelic spirits in heaven, shines forth on his throne of grace, from whence

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\* Of what particular form these Cherubim were is very uncertain ; but we are told that they were made of fine gold, and that there were two of them, whose wings were stretched upwards over all the mercy-seat, they being placed at each end of it, with their faces looking one toward the other, and downward toward the mercy-seat, Ex. xxv. 18,—20. And they appear to have been designed to represent the holy angels,

who are Christ's attendants, and God's ministers to do his will ; and who, in a beautiful allusion to the posture of these figures, are said to pry and search, and, like persons stooping down, (κατακυρτω) to look into the mysteries of redemption by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 12.

† See the description of the tabernacle, and of all its utensils, more at large in *Usher's Hist.* vol. I. p. 651,—959. Fol.

whence he reveals his will, and communes with his people, through Jesus Christ, who is the gospel-High Priest, and the great Propitiation for sin, (*Rom. iii. 25.*) as his atonement is fully commensurate to all the demands of the broken law, and was typified by the *propitiatory* or *mercy-seat*, as a complete covering interposed between God, who appears on his throne of grace, and the law as laid up in the ark; and so covered the transgressions of it from his avenging eye, that true believers in his Son might not be dealt with in a way of justice for them, according to their deserts. But of these things, how significant soever they be, it is not so much our business at present particularly to discourse; with regard to their mystical meaning \*, as it is to explain the *ordinances* of divine worship, relating to the tabernacle, to which we shall proceed; as the principal point in view.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God:

6 Now the whole fabric of this sacred house, together with all its utensils, being thus thoroughly prepared and finished, (*κατεσκευασμένον*) according to the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount, (*chap. viii. 5.*) The ordinary priests went every day, and at all times, as occasions required, into the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in distinction from the holiest of all, (*Ex. xxvi. 33.*); and there they performed all the services that belonged to their office, relating to the worship of God; such as offering sacrifices, dressing the lamps, and burning incense on the golden altar.

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

7 But the high priest, and he only, who was the most eminent figure of Christ, went into the second part of the tabernacle, which lay within the vail, and was called the holiest of all, (*ver. 3.*) and he himself went into it, not every day, as the ordinary priests did into the first part of the tabernacle; but only on one day of every year †, namely, the great day of atone-

ment;

#### N O T E.

\* This recital of the various utensils of the tabernacle intimates that there was a mystical meaning in them, though the apostle did not intend to insist upon it, as not being necessary to his immediate design.

† Though the high priest entered into the holy of holies only on one day of the year, which was the great day of atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month, *Lev. xvi. 23, 29.* or in the month which the Jews call *Tizzi*, and answers partly to our September, and partly to our October, and was the seventh month of their ecclesiastical year; yet he entered into it twice or thrice, at least,

on that day. Two of these times the apostle here takes notice of, (*ver. 12, 13.*) One was, when he brought into it the blood of a bullock, as a sin-offering; and of a ram, as a burnt offering "for himself and his house," (*Lev. xvi. 3, 6.*) The other was, when he carried into it the blood of a goat for a sin-offering for the people, (*Lev. xvi. 12, 15.*) And after the bullock was killed, but before its blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, the high priest entered with burning incense, to prepare the way by the cloud that rose from it, and covered the mercy-seat, (*Lev. xvi. 13, 14.*) And some suppose that he

ment; when even *he* could not enter with acceptance, to fulfil his sacred office there, without the blood of the expiatory sacrifices, which he had offered by slaying them before; and whose blood he went to present before the Lord, and sprinkle on the mercy-seat in the sanctuary, first for his own iniquities, as he was a sinner like the rest of mankind, and so needed a sacrifice for the remission of his own sins, and to sanctify him to the office of acting as a high priest for the people; and then to make atonement for all the iniquities and transgressions, (*Lev. xvi. 21.*) not of the whole world, but of the whole church of *Israel*, which were typical of the true *Israel* of God; whose sins might be called their *errors*, as they proceeded from ignorance, through an erroneous judgment and perverted will; and as they thereby erred in heart and life from God's ways. (*Pf. xc. 10.*) All this plainly intimated that there is no expiation of sin, nor entering into the gracious presence of God, and finding acceptance with him, but by the atoning blood of the great sacrifice of Christ, which those sacrifices typified; and by his intercession in virtue of that blood.

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

8 By this entrance of the high priest *alone* into the holy of holies, and *that* only on one day of the year with atoning blood, while all the common priests, and all the people were denied this privilege, the Holy Ghost, who by divine suggestion directed *Moses* to make this settlement of that service, and indited the scriptures which record it, evidently shewed, (*δυνατός*) that there was no liberty of access for them into that sacred place, which contained the eminent tokens of God's gracious presence \*; and that the way of believers free access to the throne of grace in this world, and of their personal entrance into heaven itself, through faith in the blood of Christ, was not so clearly and openly revealed, as it now is under the gospel-dispensation, while the frame of that first tabernacle, with the services pertaining to it, (which were afterwards also performed in the

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entered a fourth time in the service of the scape goat, which he presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with it. (See Dr Owen on the place.)

\* Some think that by *the holiest of all* is here meant the holy of holies in the earthly tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all, *ver. 3.* Others refer it to the immediate gracious presence of God in Christ, the tokens of which were there eminently exhibited in the ark, the cherubim of glory, and

the mercy-seat, which are spoken of *ver. 4. 5.* And others understand it of heaven itself, which was typified by the holy of holies, and is, by way of eminence, styled *the holy place*, (*ver. 12.*) and the holiest, into which believers have now "boldness to enter, by the blood of Jesus, (*chap. x. 19.*) And as it is difficult to say, which of these were precisely intended by the apostle, we may with good consistency take them all in.

the temple) continued to be established and observed by divine institution, as suited only to the typical state of the church of *Israel*.

9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.

9 Which tabernacle, with all its furniture and services, was, according to divine institution, a sort of parabolical (παράβολον εἰς το καίρον) or imperfect figurative representation of good things then to come †, (chap. x. 1.) until those things themselves should be more thoroughly explained, and perfectly fulfilled, as they now are under the present gospel-dispensation; in which former time, and in the tabernacle then erected, various offerings were presented to the Lord, (some of which were without blood, and others, of a more directly propitiatory nature, were slain sacrifices) which, though they availed for the purifying of the flesh from ceremonial defilement, (ver. 13.) and for taking off the temporal punishment that *Israel's* sins exposed them to, as they were members of the civil community under God, as their political king ‡; yet they had not worth or virtue enough in themselves to atone for moral evil, or to take away the guilt of sin, with respect to its obligation to eternal punishment, from any of the worshippers (chap. x. 1.) that presented, or were concerned in those sacrifices; nor were they sufficient to satisfy them that the justice of God was effectually appeased, or to purge their consciences from a disquieting and condemning sense of guilt, and of obnoxiousness thereby to divine wrath in the world to come: All the use they had, with reference hitherto, was only to lead their faith to the great and true propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which was typified, and pointed to, by these ceremonial offerings;

10 Which stood only

10 Which, to perfect the sacrifice \*, were attended with

#### NOTES.

† The word *then* is not in the original, though our translators have not distinguished it, as usual in such cases, by putting it in a different character; and therefore the time present may by the construction refer, either to the former time of the legal services in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; or to the present time of the gospel state.

‡ It appears from chap. x. 1.—6. that legal offerings and sacrifices were utterly insufficient to take away the moral guilt of sin, and the punishment due for it, as committed against God, as the Lord of conscience and supreme Law-giver, and Judge of all. But they were fit and lively types of the complete and perfect atonement, which was made for that purpose by the sacrifice of

Christ; because they were a proper atonement for political guilt, which was contracted by transgressing the laws of theocracy, under the formal notion of the laws of God's civil government, as the King of *Israel*. Accordingly, when any one had defrauded another of his property, he was to restore it in full value, and "bring his trespass-offering to the Lord:" Whereupon it was said, "the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he had done in trespassing therein," (Lev. vi. 2.—7.)

\* Which *stood* is not in the original; and therefore the skill of the critics has been much exercised to little purpose in fixing the connection of this with the preceding verb. Bu



only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation.

with only *meat and drink-offerings*, and various sorts of washings of the sacrifices, and of the priests and people, and with almost numberless other ceremonial rites, which may be called *carnal ordinances*, as they sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh, and were apt to raise gross notions of spiritual things in carnal minds: And being insufficient to purify the conscience, and to perfect the state of the church, they were never designed to be always continued in their use; but were laid, as a yoke of bondage, upon the people under the law, (*Acts xv. 10.*) only for a certain season, till the days of the Messiah, when all things should be reduced to their proper order and regulation, for reforming all defects in the worship of God, and setting it up in a complete state of spirituality and holiness, light and grace, to his glory, and the salvation of the church.

11 But Christ, being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

11 But the Messiah, who was all along promised and expected, as he that should come, (*Mat. xi. 3.*) has now actually appeared in his incarnate state, as an high priest, to accomplish the services in the most effectual manner, that were only shadowed out by those ceremonial ordinances; and so to procure all the blessings of the gospel-state which were then future benefits, and all the blessings of glory which are still to be enjoyed in a better world to come. And this he has done, as having officiated in, and by means of, a much more noble and excellent tabernacle than that in which the legal priests ministered, even in, and by his own human body, (see the note on *chap. viii. 2.*) which is greater, not indeed in bulk and measure, but in worth and dignity, and is every way better fitted for, and more perfectly answers the end of, his priestly ministration, than that earthly tabernacle possibly could; and which was not, like the fabric of that tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, made by the skill and workmanship of men, (*Exod. xxxi. 2,—7. and xxxvi. 1. and 2 Chron. ii. 5, 6, 7.*) No, this more excellent tabernacle is not of human structure, as all material buildings are; but was formed by the immediate miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, without the operation of any man whatsoever. (*Luke i. 34, 35.*)

12 Neither by the blood of goats and

12 And the sacrifice which he offered on earth, and its blood, by the merit of which he entered into the sanctuary above, are every way more excellent than those

#### N O T E.

But as the learned know where to consult them, I shall not puzzle the common reader with them, which would be to no profit;

but have given such a view of the connection as I take to be least forced, and most easy to be understood.

and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

those under the law: For it was not by the blood of goats, bulls, or calves, such as were offered for atonement by the typical high priest according to the law, before their blood was carried into the holy of holies, (*Lev. xvi. 3,—6.*) but it was in virtue of his own most precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, (*1 Pet. i. 19.*) that he entered through the veil of his own flesh, (*chap. x. 20.*) not, like the former high priests, into an earthly sanctuary on one day of every year; but, *once for all*, (*chap. x. 10.*) into the most holy place, even heaven itself, to present his own person, together with the merit of his perfect and ever-available sacrifice before, and so to appear for us in the immediate presence of God, (*ver. 24, 25, 26.*) he having, antecedent thereunto, by the sacrifice of himself, which he offered on the cross, purchased, and so effectually obtained, by the price of his own blood, not merely a year's reprieve or pardon, as was annually done in a figurative way by the typical high priest; but having found (*ὑπακίνοε*) a complete and ever-abiding satisfaction to divine justice, for the forgiveness of all trespasses, and an everlasting deliverance from all the bondage we were under to sin, and Satan, and the law, which bound us over to the wrath of God; and having thereby procured a right and title to an eternal inheritance of all blessedness and glory, which is included in the redemption that he acquired for us, who believe in him.

12 For if the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;

13 For if the typical blood of such mean worthless animals, as *bulls* and *goats*, which were offered in sacrifice by divine appointment under the law, and the ashes of an heifer, which was never yoked, and was consumed by fire as a sin-offering; If these ashes, mingled with running water, being sprinkled upon persons that were under any legal defilement by the dead, or by any other means, are sufficient, according to the institutions of the *Mosaic* law, to cleanse those persons from the external ceremonial impurities of their bodies and to give them a re-admission to public worship in the tabernacle, and into the congregation of the Lord, from which they were excluded on account of such defilement. (*Numb. chap. xix.*)

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,

14 How much more may we be assured that there is an efficacy; yea, how much greater virtue must there needs be, in the antitypical blood of so glorious an one as Christ, God-man, our High Priest and sacrifice too who offered, not brute-animals, but himself, even his whole divinely dignified human nature, without the

God; purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?

least stain or moral defilement in it, as an expiatory sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God; (*Ephes. v. 2.*) and who did this, through the infinite dignity and support of his own immortal deity, which, like the altar, sanctified the gift †; and through the anointing of the holy and eternal Spirit, which was given to him as Man and Mediator, without measure, and animated him to undergo all his sufferings, with the utmost readiness and submission to his Father's will, with an entire trust and confidence in him, with fervent zeal for his glory, and with the most amazing love and compassion to his people; How much more evidently and prevaiently, I say, beyond all ceremonial purifyings of the flesh, shall the noble blood, inclusive of all the obedience and sufferings unto death, of such a divine person, be efficacious, in the application of it to your consciences through faith therein, to cleanse them from the guilt and defilement of all your iniquities; which may be called *dead works*, as they proceed from spiritually dead principles, are altogether unprofitable and abominable, like dead carcases, and deserve and tend unto eternal death? And how much more effectual must it be, to free your conscience from dreadful apprehensions of condemnation and wrath on their account; and to give it a holy confidence toward God, as your reconciled God, that ye may worship him with freedom and delight, as the only living and true God, who will not accept of dead performances; and that ye may pay all cheerful obedience to him here, as those who are pardoned and accepted of him through the atoning death of his Son, till ye shall perfectly serve and enjoy him in the heavenly sanctuary hereafter?

14 And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death,

15 And for bringing about this great end, Jesus has undertaken, and is engaged in, the office of the mediator of the new and better covenant, which has been spoken of, (*chap. viii. 6, 8.* see the notes there); and which carries the nature of a *testamentary disposition* \*, that

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† By the eternal Spirit some understand the divine nature of Christ; and others the Holy Spirit, as some copies read it. But it being hard to say which of these may be most directly intended; and his divine nature, and the Holy Spirit being, in their respective ways of operation, very nearly concerned in this offering of himself, the paraphrase has taken in a consideration of both.

\* Dr Owen observes on this text, that the *Septuagint* constantly render the Hebrew word (*N'ba*) by the Greek word, (*διαθήκη*) which

is here translated a *testament*, and at other times a *covenant*; that there is no other word than *that* (*הברית*) in the Hebrew language to express a testament by; and that it is often used to express a free promise, which has more of the nature of a testament than of a proper covenant, and best agrees to the nature of God's covenant with man. He further observes, that though the Sinai-covenant, so far as it was a covenant, was confirmed by the blood of sacrifices; yet as in those sacrifices death was comprised, it was to confirm the testamentary grant of the

death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth.

that by means, not of legal sacrifices, but of his meritorious death for the remission of sin, and deliverance of sinners from the guilt and punishment of those iniquities which were committed under the Old, as well as New Testament, they who are effectually called to the faith of Christ, whether before or after his death, might, in virtue of it, be made partakers of the great promise to Abraham, that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed, (*Gen. xxii. 18.*); which contained a promise of all the blessings of grace and glory, even unto the obtaining, not of a temporal possession, like the land of Canaan, but of an everlasting inheritance of heavenly happiness, which was typified by that land, and was promised in that covenant to all his spiritual seed. (*Gal. iii. 18, 29.*)

16 And Jesus being not only the mediator of reconciliation with God, to purchase the blessings of the new covenant, and ratify it by his blood; but being also a testator to bequeath them, as legacies in his last will and testament, (*Luke xxii. 29, and John xiv. 27*) his bloodshed, answerable to this character, was to be unto death: For in the very nature and reason of things, and according to the universal law and custom of all nations, when any last will or testament is made, the death of the party, who therein disposed of his own goods, is necessary, and the proof of it must be produced, (*επισημαίνω*) to give it effect, in order to its being executed. This is a plain case.

17 For as a testament is the authentic signification of men's last will, with regard to the disposal of their property, in the time, way, and manner, which they appoint for it to take place after their decease; so it is valid and pleadable, only after the persons that made it are dead; because (*οτι*) as long as the testator himself is alive, the testamentary disposition is revocable at his will and pleasure, and gives no legal title to any one, that would pretend to claim or inherit under it: But when once he is dead, all its lawful bequests to every legatee are irrevocably established, so as not to be altered or disannulled, (*Gal. iii. 15.*) It was therefore necessary for Christ to die, as, for many other reasons, so particularly that the promises of the covenant, which he also made his

#### N O T E.

Inheritance of the land of Canaan; for death was necessary to the confirmation of a testament, which then could only be in type and representation: The testator himself was not to die for the establishment of a typical inheritance; but Christ,

as Mediator of the New Testament, was to die, not as the high priests of old did a natural death for themselves, but as the sacrifice died, that was slain and offered for others. (See p. 319, and 407. See also our note on chap. vii. 22.)

his testamentary gift, might be in full force to all that claim by faith under him : But he so far excels all human testators, that as the merit of his death reached back to Old Testament-believers, (*ver.* 15.) and as he never died in his whole person ; so he, as man and mediator, now lives in heaven, to take care of the faithful execution of his own will, and gives the whole inheritance of grace and glory to every heir of promise, without losing his own property in it, and without dividing the inheritance, so as that one should have one part, and another another part ; but that each may have the whole, as if none but himself were to enjoy it.

18 Whereupon, neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

18 This manner of ratifying the gospel-covenant is somewhat answerable to the way in which the *Sinai* covenant was consecrated or solemnly separated to sacred use, and became valid, as it was the instrument whereby the terms of that special relation were settled, which God entered into with his people *Israel* ; which covenant was not established without the blood of the typical sacrifices, that had been slain ; much less could the new covenant, which has more directly the nature of a testament, be confirmed and rendered authentic for taking effect, without the death and bloodshed of Christ. (See the note on *ver.* 15.)

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.

19 And that the typical blood was used for this, together with other purposes of purification and remission of sins, appears from the various sprinklings of it : For as *Moses* was appointed of God, and accepted by the people, to be a spokesman, and sort of mediator, in all the transactions that passed between God and them, (*Exod.* xx. 18, 19, and *Deut.* v. 22,—28.) ; so when he had recited all the words of the Lord contained in the moral law, which was written on two tables of stone, and all the judgments, (*Exod.* xxiv. 3) contained in the institutions, which peculiarly related to them as a church and nation, and had been specified just before, (*chapters* xx.—xxiii.) and when the people thereupon said, as with one voice, *All the words which the Lord hath said will we do*, (*Exod.* xxiv. 3.) ; then *Moses* wrote all the words of the law in a book, (*ver.* 4, 7.) ; and, in testimony of its ratification, \* he took the blood of calves and of goats, that

#### N O T E.

\* Several things are mentioned in this verse that are not found in the account given of the dedication of the covenant, *Ex.* xxi. 3,—8. But, as the apostle wrote by divine inspiration, we may be sure of the truth of what he asserts concerning them, in

which he does not confine himself to what was recorded on that particular occasion, but takes in various things that suited his purpose, relating to the use of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices, where-ever they are to be met with in the law of *Moses* ; and gives

that had been offered for burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and put it into basons (*Exod. xxiv. 5, 6.*) and having mixed the blood with spring-water to make it fluid, he took a parcel of scarlet wool to imbibe the liquor, and a bunch of hyssop to disperse it in drops; and by this means he sprinkled one half of it on the book of the law, as it lay upon the altar, to consecrate it to sacred use, as containing the covenant in which God was one party; and sprinkled the other half upon the whole congregation of the people, or at least upon their representatives, as the other party concerned in that covenant, and thereby purified them from all their legal uncleanness, and ratified the covenant between God and them; which carried a typical intimation, that the new cove-

nant

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gives such an account of them as was proper to explain them.—We only read in *Ex. xxiv. 5.* of the “offering of burnt-offerings, and peace offerings of oxen;” these oxen the apostle calls *calves*, as the word (בָּקָרָא) in the Hebrew signifying any cattle of the herd, whether young or old, and the Greek word, (μῆλα) used by the apostle, might have been rendered *heifers*; and as we are not told in the history what all the offerings on that occasion were, there is no difficulty in allowing that there were goats, as well as bullocks, since goats are mentioned among the peace-offerings made by fire, and the sin-offerings, whose blood was sprinkled, (*Lev. iii. 3, 12.* and *ix. 15, 18.* and *xvi. 15,—19.*) And though sprinkling the blood with water and scarlet-wool and hyssop is not recorded in the account of the dedication of the covenant, but only the sprinkling of the blood, which was put into basons for that purpose, (*Ex. xxiv. 4, 8.*) yet as when the blood was sprinkled in lesser quantities, it was easily done by dipping the finger into it, (*Lev. viii. 15.* and *xvi. 14*) so when greater quantities were to be sprinkled, it was mixed with running, or spring-water, to prevent its congealing, and keep it liquid: And that it might be scattered in drops, it was sprinkled with an instrument composed of scarlet-wool, to take up and retain a sufficient portion of the blood, and a bunch of hyssop to scatter it. This is called taking hyssop and scarlet, (which the apostle interprets as meant of scarlet-wool) “and dipping them in blood” and running water, and “sprinkling a house” infected with the leprosy “for its cleansing,” (*Lev. xiv. 51, 52.*)—And though “sprinkling the book” is not expressed in the history, but only “sprinkling the altar and the people,” (*Ex. xxiv. 7, 8.*) yet as the apostle tells us that Moses sprinkled the book, and the history speaks of his having “reclined and wrote all

“the words of the law, and then sprinkled “the blood on the altar,” (*ver. 3, 4, 6.*) there is no just reason to doubt, but that the book was laid upon the altar, before the altar was sprinkled; and so the book was sprinkled together with it. And whereas in the text of *Ex. xxiv. 8.* Moses is said to have sprinkled the blood on the people, the apostle tells us, by way of interpretation, that it was upon all the people, either in their representatives, which some suppose were the *twelve pillars*, according to the twelve tribes of Israel, mentioned *Ex. xxiv. 4*; or the *seventy elders*, mentioned *ver. 1.* who were the chief heads of Israel; or else upon as many of the people as were near him; and, perhaps upon every individual of them, as there might be opportunity for it in their turns, even “upon all the men, women, “and children,” who were included in the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, *Deut. xxxi. 11, 12, 13.* as they had also been before in the covenant made with Abraham, *Gen. xvi. 7,—10.* in which the females were included in the males.—Dr Owen, in a remark on the verse before us, says, “the communication of the benefits of the death of Christ, unto sanctification, is called the “sprinkling of his blood,” *1 Pet. i. 2.*; and our apostle commingles all the effects of it, unto that end, under the name of the “blood of sprinkling,” *chap. xii. 24.* And I fear (says he) that those who have used the expression with some contempt, when applied by themselves unto the sign of the communication of the benefit of the death of Christ in baptism, have not observed that reverence of holy things that is required of us. For this symbol of sprinkling was that which God himself chose and appointed, as a meet and apt token of the communication of covenant-mercy, that is, of his grace in Christ Jesus to our souls.”

nant of gospel-grace, between God and all true believers, should be confirmed by the blood of Christ's sacrifice, which is, by way of eminence, the *blood of sprinkling*, (chap. xii. 24.) and the virtue of which, in its application, is effectual for cleansing from the guilt and defilement of sin, by pardoning and sanctifying grace, as was typified by *that* blood and water, and was afterward signified by the blood and water which came out of Christ's pierced side. (*John* xix. 34, 35. See the note there.)

20 Saying,  
This is the blood  
of the testament  
which God hath  
enjoined unto  
you.

20 While *Moses* was in this manner sprinkling the blood, and showing it to the people, he said to them, (*Exod.* xxiv. 8.) *Behold the blood of the covenant*, (i. e.) This blood is a token of its confirmation by divine authority, between God and you, whereby his faithfulness, on one hand, for fulfilling his promises; and your obedience, on the other, for performing its duties, are engaged, according to what I have published unto you from the Lord, and ye have consented to, that ye may be dealt with according to its tenor.

21 Moreover,  
he sprinkled like-  
wise with blood  
both

21 Furthermore, when the tabernacle was framed and furnished with its appointed vessels of service, \* *Moses* also ordered that it should be sprinkled with the blood of

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\* The tabernacle was not erected, nor all its vessels formed, till some time after *Moses* received the law, and the forementioned solemn transactions had passed: And therefore the sprinkling of blood to sanctify the tabernacle and its utensils could not be at that time; but must relate to what was afterward to be done, probably at the first setting up of the tabernacle: since *Moses*, giving an account of that, (*Ex.* xl. 9, 10, 11.) ordered the "tabernacle, and all things therein" to be hallowed with unointed oil; after which follows the consecration of *Aaron* and his sons by anointing them, ver. 12,—15.) And as the anointing of them for their consecration was attended with the sprinkling of blood, according to the order about it in *Ex.* xxviii. 4. compared with chap. xxix. 20, 29. it is reasonable to conclude, that the anointing of the tabernacle, and all its vessels were so too; and *Josephus* says, (*Antiq.* lib. III. cap. 8. *Hudf.* edit.) that *Moses* consecrated the tabernacle, and all its vessels, by "anointing them with oil, and "by the blood of slain bulls and rams."—However, I rather think, with *Dr Owen* and some others, that the apostle here refers to what was annually done by the high priest on the great day of atonement: For his principal design in this discourse, as appears from what follows to the end of the chapter, was to run the comparison between Christ's per-

formances in the execution of his office in heaven, and the services of the high priest in the sanctuary, on that day. And though *Moses* did not sprinkle the tabernacle and the vessels with his own hands, on the anniversary day of atonement; yet it may be spoken of as his doing it, because it was done by the high priest, according to divine appointment in the law delivered by him: For *Moses* often signifies his law as in *Luke* xxiv. 27, 44. *Acts* xv. 21. and *1 Cor.* iii. 14. And the apostle, having finished his account of what was done at the dedication of the covenant, proceeds, in this and the next verse, to other standing ordinances of sprinkling the blood of sacrifices for purification and atonement, the more fully to shew how they shadowed out the virtue of Christ's atoning blood for taking away sin; which he insists upon at large in the next chapter. And that he in this verse speaks of things done at a different time from those which were just before mentioned, is suggested by the way of his introducing it, saying, "Moreover, likewise he sprinkled with "blood the tabernacle," &c. And then in the next verse, he says, "almost all things "are by the law purged with blood, and "without shedding of blood is no remission;" thereby intimating what was the ordinary continued practice all along under the law.

both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

of the sacrifices, and that this should be repeatedly done on the great day of atonement every year; and that, together with the tabernacle, all the utensils pertaining to it, and to the ministrations of the priests in it, should be thereby cleansed from the defilements of the people, and sanctified for religious services; even as the mercy-seat, and altar of incense, annually were by the high priest on every return of that day, because of the sins of the people, that they might be purified from the legal uncleanness which had been contracted thereby, (*Lev. xvi. 14,—19.*)

21 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

22 And so important was the blood of sacrifices to that dispensation, that almost every thing relating to purification, and indeed all things, except those that were to be purified by fire and water, \* and had no moral impurity in them, are cleansed, according to the institution of the law, by the offering and sprinkling of typical blood: And, even by the tenor of the *Sinai* covenant, there is no such thing as forgiveness of sin to be obtained without the bloodshed of atoning sacrifices; which evidently typified, and strongly pointed to the blood of Jesus Christ for effectually cleansing us from all sin, (*1 John i. 7.*) and intimate that there can be no real purgation from sin without his blood.

23 It was therefore necessary, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

23 It therefore plainly appears from what has been said, that, by the appointment and commandment of God, it was necessary that, not only the book of the covenant, and the people; but also that the tabernacle and all its utensils, which were figurative representations of heaven, and of the blessings pertaining to it, according to the model or delineations, (*υποδείγματα*) that were shewn to *Moses* in the mount, (see the note on *chap. viii. 5.*) should be cleansed and set apart for sacred use by the typical sacrifices and various sprinklings but now mentioned; inasmuch that the high priest was never to enter into the holy of holies without the blood of those sacrifices. But as the heavenly things themselves are incomparably more excellent than those patterns of them; so it was necessary, according to the infinite wisdom, holiness, and sovereign will and appointment

of

#### N O T E.

\* Every thing that might abide the fire was indeed to pass through *that* for cleansing, and to be purified with the water of separation, *Numb. xxi. 23*; and both the clothes and bodies of those who led away the scape-goat, and who burnt the sin-offerings, were to be washed with water; and so was the flesh of those who had touched such things as

were ceremonially unclean, (*Lev. xvi. 26,—28. and xxii. 6.*) But as there was no moral defilement in any of those things; so the apostle, not reckoning them to his purpose, passes them over, and says, with a tacit exception of such like things, that *almost* “all things were by the law purged with blood.”



of God, answerable to these figurative representations, that the heavenly sanctuary itself, and every thing relative to it, should be consecrated to holy use for sinful creatures \*, by a proportionably more noble, excellent and worthy sacrifice, than all that were offered under the law, that in virtue of this great sacrifice, not only the new covenant between God and his people might be confirmed, and they cleansed from all iniquity; but that Jesus, their High Priest himself, might also be fully consecrated to his office, (*John xvii. 19.*) and enter into heaven itself to present his blood before the throne of God, (*Heb. ix. 12.*); and might prepare that holy habitation for their use and enjoyment, who in due season were to follow him thither. (*John xiv. 2, 3.*)

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

24 For Christ, the anointed High Priest of the church, has not entered, like the high priest of old, into such earthly places, as were framed by the hands of men, and were no more than mere figures and resemblances of the heavenly sanctuary, and true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, (*chap. viii. 2.*) and the model of which was given to Moses on the mount, (*chap. viii. 5.*) †; but he is ascended in his human nature with the blood of his sacrifice into heaven itself, even the heaven of heavens, now in, and by means of that nature, and in that holiest of all, to fulfil the remainder of his priestly office, by appearing in the immediate presence of God's glory, as our representative, to present before him, as on a throne of grace, the merit of his blood in his ever living to make intercession for us, who come unto God by him. (*Chap. vii. 25.*)

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy

25 Not that we are to imagine as if, in order to his entering into this heavenly sanctuary, and presenting his atoning blood there, it was necessary for him to offer himself a sacrifice, as he did on the cross in suffering unto

#### N O T E S.

\* *Better sacrifices* is here put, by an analogy of number, for *a better sacrifice*, in an antithesis to the legal sacrifices; because this is more eminent in its virtue than, and includes the signification of, all those sacrifices: For it is not only the one sacrifice of Christ that is intended, as appears from the following verses, where the apostle speaks of it, as but once offered, and as completely sufficient alone, and of itself, to answer its end.

† *Holy places*, in the plural number, seem to me to signify the entire building of the tabernacle, inclusive of the court of the priests and of the holy of holies, into which the high priest passed through the veil: And Christ's entering, in opposition thereunto, into heaven itself, may intimate that, thro

the offering of himself, he ministers in his human nature, prefigured by the tabernacle, and in heaven, prefigured by the sanctuary, according to what has been observed about the distinction between the sanctuary and tabernacle, (see the note on *chap. viii. 2.*) and though the word (*αἱρέματα*) rendered *the figures*, is most commonly understood to signify that which answers the type; yet it here evidently means the same thing with the patterns mentioned in the preceding verse, which represented the things signified by them, answerable to the perfect platform that was given of them to Moses in the mount, (See the paraphrase and note on *chap. viii. 5.* and Dr Owen on this verse.)

holy place every year, with blood of others :

unto death, more than once, which alone was completely satisfactory to divine justice ; or that he should frequently repeat it, as, according to the Jewish institution, the high priest offered sacrifices, because of their imperfection, every year, in order to his entering into the worldly sanctuary, not with his own blood, but with the blood of other creatures, mere animals, that could never take away our sins, which rendered us unworthy and unmeet to be admitted into God's immediate presence in heaven.

16 (For then might he often have suffered since the foundation of the world :) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

26 For if there had been a necessity of a repetition of his offering, as there was of those under the law, because of their imperfection ; then he must have shed his blood for making atonement very often from the time that sin entered into the world \*, which was soon after the foundation of the earth was laid ; since, otherwise, there could have been no expiation by his blood for the sins of those that lived in former ages : But such is the infinite virtue, perfection, and dignity of the excellent sacrifice which Christ has offered, and such is the extent of its efficacy backwards and forward, to all former as well as future generations, that now, at the close of the Jewish dispensation, to put an end to that, and at the introduction of the gospel-dispensation to establish this, which is the last and best of all that ever will be set up in our world, (see the note on chap. i. 2. and Mr. Joseph Mede's apostacy, &c. chapters xi. and xii.) ; he at this time, once for all, (*αὐτοπαρουσία*) has been manifested in the flesh to expiate the guilt, and (*ἰς ἀἔτιμον*) abolish the power of sin, with all its dreadful effects, by his meritorious sufferings unto death, when he offered a sacrifice, not of bulls and goats, but of himself, whose entire human nature, soul as well as body, and that dignified by the personally united Godhead, was the offering he made for sin ; and so was of such infinite value, as not to need a repetition of it, or any other propitiatory sacrifice besides it.

17 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment :

27 And in as much as, by the settled law and righteous appointment of God, upon the entrance of sin, for the punishment of it, all mankind, in the ordinary course of things †, must die once, and but once out of this

#### N O T E S.

\* As there was no need of any expiatory sacrifice, till sin invaded human nature : so † Since the foundation of the world" in this place must be understood to mean, not absolutely from the creation of the world, but from the fall of Adam, which was quickly

after it ; and thus the phrase is to be understood, Luke. x. 30.

† Though all men in general must die, and come to judgment, according to the penal sentence ; yet as there was an exemption from dying, by the special favour of God on Christ's

this mortal state, never to return to it more; and, after that, must appear at the awful bar of a future judgment, to be dealt with according to the demerit of their deeds done in the body; unless they be relieved by grace:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

28 So Christ, to take off *the curse* of the law-sentence for sin, died once, and but once \*, and thereby offered one only sacrifice to bear the guilt and punishment of the sins of his people, who may well be called *many*, as they are an innumerable multitude, even all that believe in him. And unto them, who with faith, hope, desire, and love, expect his coming again to judgment, and patiently wait for it, looking for salvation alone by him, he will personally appear at what may be called, by way of eminence, the *second time*, not as he did before, in a state of humiliation and suffering for their sins; but in all his majesty and glory, as no longer bearing their iniquities, but coming to give them a complete enjoyment of all the happiness of the heavenly world, to which he will adjudge them, soul and body, at the last day, as the fruit and effect of what by his death he has obtained for them.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How gradually has God made known his mind and will about the great things that relate to Christ, and salvation by him! These were obscurely hinted in typical representations, by the earthly tabernacle and its various utensils, and services; but are brought to clear light by gospel-revelation, that we may behold in Christ far more transcendent glories than ever appeared in those shadows, which were to be fulfilled in him. May we be led to this grand antitype for all the light and grace, pardon of sin, communion with God, and spiritual food for our souls, that were typified by those legal institutions, which could make nothing perfect, as pertaining to the conscience!—What a consummate and glorious High Priest is Christ! All of that character under the law were only figures of him; but he, as our gospel High Priest, ministers in the most excellent tabernacle of his own human nature, and in heaven itself; and has entered, once for all, into that most holy place, there to abide for ever, in virtue of his own blood, by which he obtained eternal redemption for us. With what satisfaction may we depend upon the

#### N O T E S.

Christ's account, in the case of Enoch and Elias; so there will be of those that shall be alive on earth at Christ's second coming, 1 Thess. iv. 17. And though in the common course believers must die, and all of them must appear in judgment, as well as others: yet the sting of death, and the rigour of proceeding against them, and the condemning sentence that shall be passed upon others, will be taken off from them, thro' the merit of Christ, who will appear, as the Judge of all, to their salvation.

\* "Christ's being once offered to bear the sins of many," evidently answers to its being "appointed unto men once to die;"

(ver. 27.) and shews that the offering of his propitiatory sacrifice was, strictly speaking, on the cross, and not in heaven; and shews that this one offering, (which, in opposition to his suffering often, (ver. 26.) is called "his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,") is intended all along in the foregoing context; it being inconsistent with his state in heaven to continue under sufferings; and the presentation of the blood of his sacrifice there, being an ever-continuing exhibition of the same, cannot be properly said to be *but once*.

the efficacy of his blood, without which there is no remission ! If sprinkling the blood of animals, and the ashes of an heifer, availed for ceremonial purifications of the body ; how much more must the precious blood of Christ, who offered himself to God, as an immaculate and divinely dignified lamb, purge our souls from the guilt, defilement and power of sin, in its application to them : O blessed time of reformation ! The gospel-covenant relating hereunto is sure and certain : Whether we consider it as the covenant of God the Father with his people in Christ, or as Christ's testamentary bequest, all its promises are ratified past repeal ; and all its blessings, unto the remission of sin, and the inheritance of eternal life, may be claimed ; and shall be enjoyed by them, that are effectually called in every age. But how necessary is our Lord's intercessory presentation of his sacrifice in heaven, and application of it to our souls on earth, to render it efficacious to our own salvation !—All mankind in the general course of things must, by divine appointment, unavoidably die, and come to judgment ; but, blessed be God, that every true believer has a happy relief against the terror of these thoughts : For to them who look, and wait in a suitable manner, for Christ's second coming, he will appear in all his glory to adjudge them to, and give them possession of, all possible happiness, in soul and body for ever, on account of the one offering he has made of himself for them.

## C H A P. X.

*The apostle shuts up his main argument relating to the insufficiency of all legal sacrifices for taking away sin, 1,—4. And to the necessity and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ for that purpose, according to the tenor of the new covenant, which contains the substantial blessings that the law was only the shadow of, 5,—18. And, having finished the doctrinal, he enters on the practical part of the epistle, by way of inference from the preceding discourse, from which he draws an argument for holy boldness in the believer's access to God through Jesus Christ, 19,—22. And for steadfastness in the faith, and excitations to mutual love and duty, and to frequent assemblies together for religious worship, 23,—25. And then he warns them of the danger of apostasy, 26,—31. Reminds them of their former illumination, and sufferings with patience and spiritual joy, 32,—34. And encourages them to maintain their holy profession to the end of their days, 35,—39.*

## TEXT.

FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

## PARAPHRASE.

IT evidently appears then from all that hath been insisted on in the foregoing discourse, that the *Mosaic* law, with all its institutions of the Levitical priesthood, and sacrifices, whose blood was carried into the holy of holies, was only a typical representation of Christ and his sacrifice offered on earth, and of his entering with his own blood into heaven, to present the merit of it there, as the purchase of all the substantial privileges and blessings, which were then future, and to be introduced under the gospel-state : Yea, it was so far from containing the substance of those eminently good things themselves, that it was rather like the imperfect representation,

sentation, which the mere shadow of a man's body makes of him, than like his image in a looking-glass, which gives a more distinct view of him. (See the note on 2 Cor. iii. 18.) And therefore the law, with all those figurative sacrifices, which, because of their imperfection, the high priest offered repeatedly every year, on the great day of atonement, can never be effectual to discharge them from the guilt of sin, and bring them into a state of reconciliation and acceptance with God, that are concerned in, and attend upon those ceremonial services, and approach the divine majesty by those sacrifices; nor can they ever make them perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. (*Chap. ix. 9.* see the note there.)

2 For then, would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

2 For had these ends been perfectly obtained by those sacrifices, Is it not plain that God would never have appointed, and that there would have been no occasion for frequent; or indeed for any repetition of them, after they were first offered? They then would certainly have ceased to be offered any more; because, on supposition that the worshippers, to whom those sacrifices related, were really and completely cleansed thereby at once from their guilt, and had obtained acceptance with God to eternal life, they would have had no perplexing and distressing self-condemnings in their consciences, as if, for want of a further atonement, they were still in an unpardoned state, or needed some other sacrifice to purify and discharge them from the guilt of their sins before God; which if it were once perfectly done, would have been done for ever.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

3 But this was so far from being their case, that in the very offering of those legal sacrifices at returning seasons, there was every year, on the great day of atonement, a solemn *public confession*, made by the high priest, of all the sins of *Israel*, and they were to *afflict their souls* for them, (*Lev. xvi. 21, 22, 29, 31.*) which brought their sins to a painful remembrance, and plainly shows that their former sacrifices had not perfectly atoned for them, as indeed in the nature of things they could not.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

4 For there is such an infinite disproportion between those little worthless sacrifices, and the demerit of sin and the high demands of God's law and justice to make satisfaction for it, and to demonstrate his absolute detestation of it, as committed against his infinite majesty, crown, and dignity, that it is really impossible for the blood of such mean animals, as bulls and goats, to have virtue enough in themselves, or to be deemed, according

any rules of wisdom or justice, a sufficient offering

to make a true, proper, and effectual atonement for sin; they could only be designed of God to prefigure that all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, which alone has worth and efficacy in itself, to answer this great end.

5 Since therefore there was such an absolute defect in those legal sacrifices to answer this important purpose; When our blessed Lord spake with a reference to his coming into this lower world, (*Pf.* xl. 6, 7, 8.) and when he actually came into his incarnate state for executing his priestly office, he said to God his Father, Thou wouldst not accept of legal sacrifices and offerings of any kind, as a proper expiation for sin; they being of too little value to satisfy thy law and justice for it: But, that an offering equal to the offence might be made to thee, Thou, in thy infinite wisdom and good pleasure, and in mercy to thy church, hast, by an extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost, prepared a true human body\*, animated with a human soul, and so formed a proper human nature for me, that I thy eternal Son, might personally unite it to myself, and thereby dignify it with infinite worth to render it available for a complete atonement.

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure:

6 Thou couldst not approve of, or acquiesce, or take pleasure in any of the sacrifices under the law; no, nor of the most eminent of them; such as burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin: Thou neither didst intend or desire any of these, nor take the least complacency and rest in them, as if they were answerable to the demands of thy law and justice, or worthy of thy wisdom and holiness to accept, or were in themselves of sufficient virtue to take away sin.

7 When

#### N O T E.

\* The words in the Hebrew of *Pf.* xl. 6. from whence this passage is quoted, are, "Mine ear hast thou bored." Various have been the conjectures of the learned to reconcile the difference between these words and the apostle's expression, "A body hast thou prepared me," which agrees with the translation that the Seventy have given of them. But what, upon the whole, appears to me to be the most natural and easy way of accounting for this difference, is, that our author designed to give the sense of this clause, as he also does of some following passages, rather than to "recite the words of the Seventy;" it being questionable whether that translation has not been altered in some places from the New Testament, and it being unlikely that the apostle should ever quote it, especially to the Hebrews, and where it is wrong. (See Dr Owen on the

place.) Accordingly some think that there is an allusion to the boring of a servant's ear through with an awl, who was to serve his master for ever. (*Exod.* xxi. 5, 6.) But others, observing that the Hebrew word there used is different from that in *Pf.* xl. 6. understand it of God's firing Christ with a body, of which *the ear* is, by a synecdoche, put for the whole, because it is by the ear that men hear and listen to him, whom they are to obey; in allusion to which Christ says, "The Lord God has opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious," &c. (*Isa.* l. 1.) And, by a like synecdoche, the ear may be put for the whole of Christ's human nature, soul and body, which he came to offer as a sacrifice for sin, and is called his offering himself. (See *Isa.* liii. 10. *Mark* xiv. 34. *Eph.* v. 2. and *Heb.* ix. 14.)

7 Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

7 When this was the state of the case, then, according to what is recorded concerning me at the head of the roll of eternity \*, and of scripture-prophecy, relating to the sacrifice that thou wouldst accept, I presented myself to thee, as ready to do what all those sacrifices could not, saying, Behold, I cheerfully come into a state of incarnation at thy call, to fulfil thy purposes of grace, and my covenant-engagements to thee, and all the prophecies and promises concerning me; and to perform the good pleasure of thy will in doing thy work, and particularly in suffering unto death whatsoever thou, O God, my Father, requirest for the honour of thy law and justice, and for making a proper and complete satisfaction for sin.

8 Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein, (which are offered by the law,)

8 When in the above-cited place our Lord said, Thou wouldst not accept of any kind of sacrifice and offering; no, not of any burnt-offering and offering for sin, as an effectual atonement; nor hadst thou the least complacency of rest in that consideration of any of them which are offered, according to thine appointment in the *Mosaic law*;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

9 Then, in reflection upon the utter insufficiency of those sacrifices, he said, Behold, O God of righteousness and salvation, here am I; Take the satisfaction, thy justice demands from me; I freely come to put myself in the sinner's stead, to bear his curse, and to answer the utmost of thy requirements, according to what thou thyself has appointed, and dost approve of and delight in, to open a way for the remission of sin. Now, by our Lord's saying this, he manifestly shows that the former appointment or declaration of God's will, with regard to the first covenant and all its offerings, were to be no longer in force, that he might confirm and give effect to this last-mentioned will, with respect to the new covenant, and the sacrifice which he himself came to offer for giving it an everlasting establishment.

10 By the which will

10 By which will of God, as fulfilled by Christ, (ver. 9.) we, who believe in him, are not in a typical and

#### N O T E.

\* The volume of the book has been greatly criticised upon by the learned; and as the books of the ancients were commonly rolls of parchment, from whence they were called *volumes*, some have thought that the volume of the roll is a tautology without sense: But as the word (*ῥολλος*) rendered a *volume*, signifies also the *head*, it might be, perhaps, better rendered the *head of the book*; and so may refer either to the first and principal ar-

ticle in the roll of eternity, or book of life, which contained Christ's engagement to the Father; or to the first promise of the "seed" of the woman to bruise the serpent's head," which stands at the head or beginning of the first volume or book of scripture, Gen. iii. 15. or may refer to the "former part of the Old Testament," which speaks of sacrifices in their typical reference to the sacrifice of Christ.

will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

and ceremonial way, as *Israel* were by the sacrifices under the law, but really and effectually purged from the guilt and defilement of our sins; and are dedicated to God, and purified as a peculiar people for his service, through the merit and virtue of the sacrificial offering of Christ's human nature, (see the note on *ver. 5.*) of which the body is the visible part, answering to the bodies of the beasts that were slain: Which offering he made, not with any repetition of it, like those under the law, but only once, and *that* for ever; it being in itself absolutely perfect, and available for making a complete atonement at once. (See the note on *chap. ix. 28.*) And herein lyes an eminent and remarkable difference between all the former priests and their sacrifices, and Jesus, our great High Priest and his sacrifice.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

11 Every legal priest, in token of humble reverence, as well as of readiness to engage in the service of God \*, *stands* before him, frequently officiating in his ministrations, and offering the same sort of animal sacrifices according to his station; none of which repeated sacrifices, whether daily or annual, can ever make a proper expiation to the satisfaction of divine justice for any, much less for *all manner* of sins.

12 But he, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God;

12 But so incomparably superior is the dignity of Christ's person and sacrifice, above them and theirs, that this † gospel High Priest, after he had once offered himself, as the one only atoning sacrifice for all the sins of his people, immediately, upon his finishing that part of his office, rose from the dead to immortal honour, that he might live, and exercise his office, in an endless state of the highest dignity, rest, and authority, which may be figuratively represented by his eternally *sitting down* with majesty, glory, and acceptation, at God the Father's right hand; (see the note on *Acts vii. 55.*)

13 From

#### N O T E S.

\* Every priest *stands* daily ministering seems in this place to denote the posture of humble service and reverence with which the priests performed their ministrations; in opposition to which Christ is represented, in the present execution of his office, as sitting down with grandeur and authority "on the right hand of God," (*ver. 12.*) And as the word daily (*καθ' ἡμέραν*) is used with reverence to the high priest's offering up sacrifices once a-year, (*chap. vii. 27.* see the note there,) we may very well understand it here as relating to his offering on that day, though

not to the exclusion of the ministrations of the ordinary priests every day; and so all legal sacrifices, whether daily or annual, are represented as utterly insufficient to take away sin.

† As *man* is not in the original, and *priest* is the nearest antecedent, *ver. 11.* I should think the pronoun (*αὐτός*) might better be rendered *this priest*, or *this high priest*, according as we understand the word *priest* in the foregoing verse to signify, rather than *this man*.



13 From hence-  
forth expecting  
till his enemies  
be made his foot-  
stool.

13 From that time forward exercising all power in heaven and earth, till, according to the promise of his Father, (*Pf. cx. 1.*) and his own just expectation on that foot, and on account of his meritorious performances, sin, Satan, the world and death; yea, all the adversaries to his person and authority, people and cause, shall be actually and universally subdued, like such vanquished, despicable enemies, as are trampled under the feet of the conqueror, in token of their utter destruction, and of his absolute dominion and triumph over them, (see the paraphrase on *Rom. xvi. 20.*)

14 For by one  
offering he hath  
perfected for ever  
them that are  
sanctified.

14 For by that one offering, which he made of himself on the cross, he has obtained perfect deliverance from guilt and condemnation, and a perfect fitness for the worship and enjoyment of God, in the nearest relation and access to him, and in the most perfect state of the church, for all those who in a sacrificial sense are dedicated to God, and purged from their sins, thro' faith in him; and *that* not for a time only, but for perpetuity, without any change of their privileges and church-state on earth, or of their consummate happiness to all eternity in heaven.

15 Whereof the  
Holy Ghost also  
is a witness to us:  
for after that he  
had said before,

16 This is the  
covenant that I  
will make with  
them after those  
days, saith the  
Lord: I will put  
my laws into their  
hearts, and in  
their minds will I  
write them:

15, 16 And the Holy Ghost himself, as a divine person, has given us, in the inspired writings of the Old Testament, a sweet intimation of this important truth †, in the representation he hath therein made of the new covenant, which Christ has now established, and all the blessings of which he has now actually purchased by his death. For after he formerly had said in a prediction of gospel-times, (*Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.*) This is the tenor of the covenant of mere grace, that I will make with my people, when the days of the present dispensation shall expire, says the great Jehovah, Instead of writing my law of the ten commandments on tables of stone, as I did at mount *Sinai*; I, by a special inward operation of my Spirit, (see the note and paraphrase on *chap. viii. 10.*) will effectually inscribe the doctrines of divine revelation in the fleshly tables of their hearts and minds: (*2 Cor. iii. 3.*)

17 And their  
fins

17 And then, to assure them that nothing shall de-  
fect

#### N O T E.

† In this and the three following verses the apostle winds up his argument concerning the excellency and perfection of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ; and as he had laid the foundation of his last set of arguments for it, *chap. viii. 10.—13.* in a quotation of the account that is given of the new covenant, *Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.* so he here

issues the whole in a reference to the description there given of the covenant, as now completely ratified, and all the blessings of it purchased, and secured to the church, by the one only offering of Christ, which renders all other expiatory sacrifices, and any repetition of his own, entirely needless.

sins and iniquities  
will I remember  
no more.

feat the performance of this new covenant to them, he adds, in a way of absolute promise, with all the grace and authority of the God, who only can forgive sins, I will so perfectly pardon all their swerings from, and transgressions of my law, as never to break my covenant, on account thereof, or call them to remembrance any more, as though they were not perfectly expiated, as I did the sins of *Israel* in the annual repetition of their insufficient sacrifices, (*ver. 3.*) ; nor will I ever upbraid them with them, or produce them in judgment against them. (See the paraphrase on *chap. viii. 12.*)

18 Now, where  
remission of these  
is, there is no  
more offering for  
sin.

18 Now it is undeniable that, when there is such a complete and everlasting forgiveness of all trespasses, according to the gracious tenor of this covenant, as recorded by the Holy Ghost himself, there can be no use or need of any farther atoning sacrifice for sin, nor of Christ's repeating the sacrifice of himself; because *that*, which he has already offered, hath been effectual to procure this important blessing of the covenant, of which he is the mediator, (*chap. ix. 15.*) which he has now fully confirmed, and all the blessings of which he has purchased, once for all, by his precious blood.

19 Having there-  
fore, brethren,  
boldness to enter  
into the holiest by  
the blood of Je-  
sus,

19 Since therefore, my dear brethren in the Lord \*, we, who cordially believe in Christ, have such solid grounds of free liberty, and so rich encouragement, as may be gathered from the preceding discourse, for holy freedom and confidence in our approaches to God, as our reconciled God and Father, and so of entering by faith into the holiest of all, even heaven itself; and are admitted to it, through the merit, and application to our consciences, of the most inestimable precious blood of Jesus, our great High Priest and Sacrifice, who himself is gone thither in virtue of his own blood, to present and plead it there for us, that we might not be kept at a distance, as the people of *Israel* were from the holy of holies under the law; but might follow after him in the daily actions of our faith, till we shall have a personal entrance into the immediate presence of his glory;

20 By a new  
and living way  
which he hath  
con-

20 Since, I say, we have this liberty of access to God, through the blood of Christ, in gospel-worship, by the way of the new covenant; a way, which is now opened

#### N O T E.

\* The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of his epistle, relating to the superior excellence of the person, priesthood, and sacrifice of Christ, proceeds in this and the following verses to the end of the epistle, to

a practical improvement of the whole, which he here introduces by way of inference from the foregoing discourse, from which he here draws his argument for it.

consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his death :

opened and declared with the greatest evidence to us, and is of such perpetual use and advantage, as to be always new, so as never to wax old or decay ; and may well be called a *living way*, as the once dead, but now living Redeemer has opened it for us, and as it is the way in which we find quickning virtue unto spiritual life here, and are led on to eternal life hereafter ; and which he, who is *the way, the truth, and the life*, (John xiv. 6) has prepared, dedicated and established, (*ἀπεκρίθη*) as sacred to our use, that we might not be excluded from the true holy of holies ; but might follow our High Priest into heaven itself, by means of his crucified body, which procured this open way for us, when the *veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*, and closed no more ; which signified, among other things, that every obstruction to our entrance into heaven itself is now removed, by the death and sacrifice of Christ ; (see the paraphrase on *Mat. xxvii. 51.*)

21 And having an high priest over the house of God ;

21 And since we now have a great and glorious High Priest, every way surpassing all that went before him in his person, office, and exaltation ; a priest of infinite dignity and authority, who is the head of the church-militant on earth, and triumphant in heaven ; and who, as its Lord and proprietor, presides over it and all its concerns, as his own house, (*chap. iii. 6.*) in which God dwells after a more excellent manner than he ever did in the *Jewish* tabernacle ;

22 Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

22 Let us, upon these encouraging considerations, be emboldened to make our humble approaches to God, as our reconciled God and Father, through Jesus Christ, and as seated on a throne of grace, that, by the assistance of his Spirit, we may draw near to him in prayer, and in all other acts of religious worship, in the exercise of every grace ; in sweet and holy communion with him, and conformity to him ; with integrity and uprightness, and a heart established in the truth of the gospel ; and with the liveliest exercise of faith, even to a full assurance of the perfection of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, and of our own acceptance in coming to God thro' him, as persons whose souls, in all their powers and faculties, are cleansed from the stupidity and treachery of an unfaithful, and from the disquietude and defilement of a guilty, terrifying, and condemning conscience, by an application of the blood of Jesus, in opposition to the sprinklings of the blood of the legal sacrifices \* ; and as persons

#### N O T E.

\* As " having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," evidently alludes to ceremonial rites in various sprinklings of the blood of the sacrifice, under the law ; so having

persons who are truly sanctified to God and his service by the renewing and purifying work of the Holy Spirit (in opposition to the ceremonial cleansing of the bodies of those who drew nigh to God under the law, by their being washed with clean water) that the outward conversation, as well as the inward principles and dispositions of the heart, may be pure.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering : (for he is faithful that promised :)

23 Correspondent hereunto, Let us maintain our solemn profession, and open confession of Christ, and of our faith and hope in him, and in the promises of the new covenant; which he has ratified, and the blessings of which he has purchased by his blood; Let us persist stedfastly and invariably in our adherence to him, and in the belief and practice of every gospel-doctrine and duty, without any distrust or hesitancy, or perturbation of mind, through fear of tribulations for his sake, or of a disappointment of our hope in him : For he, who hath promised to *put his laws into his people's hearts*, and to *write them them in their minds*, (ver. 16.) is unchangeable in his truth and faithfulness, and may be fully depended upon, for all seasonable supplies of promised grace to enable us to hold on, and hold out to the end; and for a performance of all his promises unto complete salvation.

24 And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works:

24 And to subserve our stedfastness and perseverance in the faith, and in our holy profession of it, Let it be our joint concern seriously to consider our respective wants and infirmities, temptations and dangers, on one hand; and the grounds of hope and encouragement that are in Christ and in the promises on the other, that we may use all proper means, by example, exhortations, and cautions, to stir up one another, with fervency and faithfulness, to the love of God, and Christ, and the truths of the gospel; and to an affectionate union and communion one with another; and so may love as brethren, and excite each other to every evangelical and moral duty, and to every thing that is truly excellent and worthy our Christian character.

25 Not forsaking

25 And as ever we would be steadfast in the profession of our faith, and in love and good works, Let us take special

#### N O T E.

ving "our bodies washed with pure water," as it here stands in connection with those sprinklings, seems to allude to divers washings, chap. ix. 10. among which were the priest's washing his flesh in water, and having the water of purification sprinkled upon him, before he went into the presence of the Lord, Lev. xvi. 4. and Numb. viii. 7.—But if we suppose, with some expositors, that here is a reference to the New Testa-

ment-ordinance of baptism; the mode of administering it may be signified by the sprinkling of the conscience, as well as by washing the body; and the cleansing virtue of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, or of the Spirit in his applying the blood of Christ to the soul, which is signified by baptism, is expressed by God's "sprinkling clean water" upon us, that we may be clean," Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

king the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

special heed that we do not grow cool or indifferent, remiss or careless, on any pretence whatsoever, with regard to our stated and occasional meetings together, as we have opportunity, for the celebration of all divine ordinances; and, at length, desert church-assemblies, and cast off publick worship, and the communion of saints, and the solemn profession of Christ's name; and so put ourselves out of the way of his promise and blessing for our preservation and growth in grace, comfort, and holiness, as is too much the custom of some that have given up their names to Christ, but are visibly backsliding from him; and as is the lamentable case of others that have notoriously and shamefully apostatized from all their former profession of him: But instead of being influenced by their sinful and pernicious example, or treading in their dangerous steps, Let us admonish, excite, and encourage each other, to frequent our religious assemblies on all occasions, and to go on with cheerfulness and constancy in the good ways of the Lord. And ye ought to be the more diligent and earnest herein, that ye may be the better prepared against the awful time that is coming on, in proportion to the plain signs, which ye may now easily observe, that the utter destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish* nation, for their obstinate infidelity, hastens apace, and is very near at hand; and against the day of death and judgment, which ye cannot but know will soon overtake you, whether ye fall in the approaching calamity or not, and which will be an inexpressibly dreadful day apostates.

26 For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

26 For if any of us, who make a profession of Christ's name, be so much under the power of unbelief, prejudice, pride, and a worldly temper, as, not merely thro' inadvertency, or some sudden hurry of spirit, temptation, and fear of danger \*; but deliberately, resolutely, and willingly, with full consent, to reject the doctrines of the gospel and the good ways of the Lord, and to turn back to judaism, or to all irreligion; and go on in a course of sin against God, after we have been enlightened in, and convinced of the truth of the gospel, with respect to the way of salvation alone by Jesus Christ; the

#### N O T E.

\* The sin here intended, as appears from all the preceding and following context, is wilful, resolute, contemptuous, and utter apostacy from the profession of Christ and his gospel: And therefore though we ought to be always upon the strictest guard against every known sin, and to be deeply humbled

before God whenever we fall into it; yet this text is not to be understood of every sin that has been committed under the power of temptation, against light and conviction, as some tender spirited Christians are often apt to apply it to their own great discouragement and terror, almost to utter despair.

the case of such apostates is of all others the most dreadful: For as all legal sacrifices are of no farther use in the worship of God, nor ever were available to purge from the moral guilt of sin; and as there never was any sacrifice appointed under the law for presumptuous sinners; so there remains no other, than the one only sacrifice of Christ, for the remission of sins; and they that reject this last and only remedy, by perfidious unbelief, can have no interest in it; nor can there be any hope of pardon and acceptance with God on any other ground whatsoever.

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

27 But all that remains to them, as their deplorable portion, is nothing less, than a sort of terrible foreboding in their consciences of the righteous judgment of God, which will certainly overtake them, an awful emblem of which will soon be given in the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and they must look for the incensed wrath of God to fall upon them, which will burn in the most tremendous manner, like the hottest fire, to consume all such enemies as set themselves against the blessed and only Saviour. (See 2 *Theff.* i. 7, 8, 9.)

28 He that despised Moses law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses:

28 And this, the wretched apostates I am speaking of, may be assured will be their horrible end, with the highest aggravations of guilt and misery, if they only consider how severely God dealt with refractory transgressors of, and revolters from the *Mosaic* law, according to the tenor of which, whosoever contemned and presumptuously transgressed the law given by *Moses*, with regard to capital cases, for which no sacrifice was appointed, he was, by the order of God himself, (*Numb.* xv. 30, 31. and *Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 11,—13.) to be put to death, without the least pity to spare him, or to mitigate his punishment, whenever he was convicted by the testimony of two or three credible witnesses, that could prove the fact upon him. So jealous was God for the authority and honour of that dispensation.

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite un-

29 How much greater, and inexpressibly more dreadful then, must ye certainly conclude, in your own consciences, from the very nature and reason of things will that punishment be, even unto eternal death, which is justly due to, and shall be inflicted upon an apostate from the Lord Jesus Christ, and a resolute sinner against all the light and grace of the gospel, and against his own conviction of its truth, who has offered the highest indignity to the eternal Son of God himself, in trampling upon his divine person and authority, meditation and gospel, with the vilest insolence and contempt,

to the Spirit of grace?

as though he were an impostor; and who, instead of trusting for pardon and justification in that precious blood, by which the covenant of grace in its purest administration was ratified, and all its blessings procured \*, and by which the incarnate Son of God himself was consecrated to his priestly office, for the complete execution of it, has prophaneely slighted, and injuriously treated that very blood which he shed for the remission of sin, as though it were not so holy as the blood of bulls and goats; nor more sacred, or of any more value or efficacy, than the blood of a common man, or even than the blood of a malefactor, according to the account that the *Jews* made of him when they crucified him; and who, over and above all this, has spitefully, maliciously, and contemptuously opposed, affronted and vilified the person, operations, and grace, of the good Spirit, that is freely given of God for gracious purposes, and is the giver and applier of all grace, as though his wonderful attestations to Christ's character, as the true Messiah, by innumerable gifts and miraculous operations †, were delusions, or the effects of diabolical power. Such a malignant wretch blasphemes the Holy Ghost himself, and if they who only neglect the gospel-salvation, shall not escape the wrath of God, (*chap. ii. 3.*) how much less can such an apostate escape the most dreadful and eternal punishment? (*Mat. xii. 31.*)

30 For we know him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recom-

30 For we know who it is that spoke after the following awful manner, (*Deut. xxxii. 35.*) It is my incontestable right, and absolute prerogative, to execute righteous wrath upon transgressors of every kind, according

#### N O T E S.

\* "The blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified," seems to relate to Christ, who was consecrated to his priestly office by his own blood, rather than to him "who counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." For the Son of God is the immediate antecedent, and the apostle's design was to aggravate the sin of apostates, from a consideration of "the worth and dignity of the object" they slighted and abused; and as the Father is said to have sanctified Christ, or set him apart to his mediatorial office, and Christ spake of his having sanctified or dedicated and set apart himself to it by his death, *John x. 36. and xvii. 19.*; so he was sanctified to his priestly office in heaven, by the blood of the new covenant, antiverable to the sanctification or dedication of Aaron and his sons to the high priesthood for the service of the sanctuary, by the blood of the Mosaic covenant, *Lev.*

*viii. 30.*; and the scheme of this epistle for comparing Christ and the high priest under the law, naturally leads us to this sense. But if any would refer it to the person, that was guilty of the sin here spoken of, his being sanctified may be considered, as relating, not to a real, internal sanctification, but to an external visible dedication to God in his baptism and entrance into church-communion, by which he made a solemn profession of being purged from his sins, and sanctified or set apart to the Lord.

† The person here described seems to have come very near to, if not to have been guilty of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost himself, which our Lord speaks of, *Mat. xii. 31, 32.* (See the note there.) Only there may be this difference, that the apostate had "received the knowledge of the truth," (*ver. 26.*) which they, whom our Lord spoke of never did.

recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people.

according to their desert; that is an essential part of my supremacy and dominion over all, as the Judge of the whole world: And, as the vindication of my honour requires it, I will certainly, sooner or later, in my own time and way, inflict severe punishments on incorrigible offenders, in proportion to the malignity of their crimes. This was said by the great Jehovah himself, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, whose justice and truth are uncontrollable, and whose power is irresistible. And a little afterwards, it is there added, (*Deut. xxxii. 36.*) the Lord will search and try his professing people; and will as surely condemn and destroy them, that perfidiously revolt from him, as he will approve of, and save them, that are stedfast in his covenant.

31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

31 How severe then must his judgment, and the executions of it, be upon all apostates from Christ and the gospel? It is indeed dreadful to suffer the miseries that he can lay upon them, by only stirring up the fury of mere creatures against them, though the weakness of the instrument abates the force of his hand in smiting with it: But it is inexpressibly tremendous, beyond all imagination, to fall as victims into the hands of his justice, without mixture of mercy, to be punished by the immediate and almighty arm of the great and terrible God himself: who, in opposition to all idols, is the only living and true God; and whose existence, power, and activity, abide invariably and for ever, to execute wrath, as an incensed, unappeased Judge, to the utmost extremity on the despisers of his Son and Spirit, (*ver. 39.*) as well as to complete the everlasting happiness of those that hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. (*ver. 23.*)

32 *But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:*

32 But, to excite sincere believers among you to watch and guard against the beginnings of apostacy, consider how it was with you, and reflect upon the solid satisfaction and hope ye formerly experienced, in the first days of your conversion, in which, as soon as ye were enlightened in the knowledge of the gospel and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, (*ver. 26.* and see the second note on *chap. vi. 4.*) ye were followed with severe persecutions from the Jewish zealots, and their confederates; which ye, like soldiers under the Captain of salvation, and like combatants in the agonistic exercises were called to conflict with, in a glorious contention, on your part, for the sake of Christ, as with enemies, that set themselves, as it were, in battle array against him and you; and which ye patiently sustained with a noble Christian-courage and fortitude, through



through divine supports and assistances, without being daunted or dismayed at any of them, though they were of various kinds, and lay very heavy upon you :

33 Partly whilst ye were made a gazing - stock, both by reproaches and afflictions: and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

33 While, on one hand, ye were maliciously accused and injuriously exposed to public disgrace, and made a spectacle to the world, like criminals brought forth into the theatre, (*παρρησιασμένοι*) and were ignominiously treated, as the filth of the world, and off-scouring of all things, (1 Cor. iv. 9. 13.) by cruel mockings, contempt, and scorn, and by the severest oppressions from the hands of wicked men, Jews and others, for righteousness sake, and while, on the other hand, ye tenderly sympathized with, and stedfastly adhered to, assisted and bravely owned your fellow-Christians, and the apostles and servants of Christ, and mourned with them in their troubles who were abused in the same oppressive and opprobrious manner, as though all had been done against yourselves.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

34 For as to myself in particular \*, when I was in great tribulation, even unto bonds and imprisonment for the sake of Christ, ye were not ashamed to own and stand by me; but in Christian tenderness, love, and pity, ye sympathized with me, (*συνηνέχεσθε*) grieved at my distress, prayed for me, relieved my wants, and supplied me with as comfortable accommodations, as our respective circumstances admitted of: And ye yourselves cheerfully submitted to the loss of the conveniences and necessities of this life, which were violently wrested out of your hands by furious persecutors; and ye even rejoiced to think of the glorious cause for which ye suffered, (*Ἰησὺν* v. 41.) and of the rich advantage, that would accrue to your own souls thereby, as being well satisfied in your own minds, from the promises of God and your own happy experience of his grace, that ye have a better treasure in heaven, than any ye have lost or can lose upon earth; even a substantial treasure, which ye are entitled to, and is prepared by the free favour of God, and the purchase of Christ, who as your head and representative has taken possession of it for you; and which ye have the earnest of in your own souls, as what cannot be lost, or taken away from you, but abides with all safety for an everlasting inheritance at the end of all your troubles.

35 Cast not away

35 Animated therefore by your faith in Christ, and in

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to be a reference to the apostle Paul's sufferings and bonds, which were notorious, and extremely great; and in

which the Jewish believers tenderly sympathized with him, as appears from Acts xxi. 37, 38. and xxi. 4. 11, 12, 13.

way therefore  
your confidence,  
which hath great  
recompence of  
reward.

in the promises, and by your holy fortitude in sufferings for him hitherto, take heed lest, through carnal fear, and the workings of unbelief, on account of the continuance of those, or the addition of any further tribulations, ye be now disheartened, to the relinquishing; or throwing off your holy boldness, freedom, and courage (*παρρησία*) in your profession of Christ's name, gospel, and cause, and in your joyful hopes of eternal life through him; which holy boldness herein is, at present, a noble support and satisfaction under all your trials, and shall have such a blessed and glorious reward in heaven, as according to his gracious promise, (*ver. 36.*) is secured to you, and will abundantly more than make you a rich and eternal amends for all the troubles you endure in this momentary life for Christ's sake, though they be ever so great and many, like those which ye have already felt, and may yet further expect to meet with. (*See Rom. viii. 18. and 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17.*)

36 For ye have  
need of patience;  
that, after ye have  
done the will of  
God, ye might re-  
ceive the promise.

36 For according to the wise and holy appointment of God, the declarations of his word, and the disposals of his providence, that *patience may have its perfect work*, (*Jam. i. 4.*) such is your present state of afflictions and persecutions, that there is a necessity for you, and great need of abundance of grace to enable you to live in the continual exercise of a calm and quiet, humble and resigned submission to the sovereign will of God in them to the end, that after ye have yielded yourselves up, through the whole course of your lives, to the commanding and disposing will of God, in patiently and willingly complying with the most difficult instances of it, ye might receive the promised blessing of eternal life, (*1 John ii. 25.*) which shall be graciously conferred upon you, in the salvation of your souls, (*ver. 39.*) at the end of your spiritual race and warfare, that will soon be finished, and exchanged for everlasting peace and joy.

37 For yet a  
little while, and  
he that shall come  
will come, and  
will not tarry.

37 For according to an ancient prophetic vision, (*Habak. ii. 3.*) which may be applied, as relating to the Messiah and his salvation in all his remarkable appearances, the time is exceeding short, as short as can be well expected, (*μικρον χρόνον*) when the Messiah, who is coming, (*ἐρχόμενος*) will certainly come, in his righteous judgment, for the confusion of his and your enemies, and in his tender mercy for your consolation and deliverance from all their oppressions, in the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which is just at hand, and is a lively emblem of his *last*, which may be emphatically called his *second coming*, (*chap. ix. 28.*) to the utter destruction of all

impenitent and unbelieving sinners, and to your complete salvation, at the judgment of the great day; which though it be not so near as the conflagration of *Jerusalem*; yet in God's account, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, (2 *Pet.* iii. 8.) and in comparison with the endless eternity that succeeds it, will be but a very little while hence; and then he who is to come, will actually come, without fail, to your unspeakable and everlasting joy: And though ye are apt to think the time long and tedious, while ye are groaning under present afflictions; yet ye may depend upon it, that he will not delay his coming to put you into possession of the promised recompence of reward, (*ver.* 35, 36.) no, not so much as one moment beyond the appointed time, which, as it is the best time, is fixed in the purpose of God, and is near at hand, to deliver you out of all your troubles; and as death at farthest will certainly rid you of them; so it cannot be long before he will receive you to himself.

38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

38 And, (4) for your further encouragement, remember what follows in that prophecy, (*Habak.* ii. 4.) \*; The righteous man, who is justified by faith, and whose heart is purified by faith, (*Rom.* v. 1. and *Acts.* xv. 9.) shall by means of his faith live a spiritual and holy life, in a state of acceptance with God, and communion with him, and in a humble patient waiting for, and expectation of this happy event all his days upon earth; and shall live in all blessedness and glory with Christ, according to the promise, (*ver.* 36.) for ever in heaven: But in opposition to such, whoever he be, that after having made a profession of faith in Christ, shall apostatize from him †, through an unsubdued pride of spirit, and an evil heart of unbelief, which lift up themselves against him, and renounce the profession of his name, on account of the trials and sufferings it exposes him to, My soul, says God, speaking after the manner of men, shall be so far from taking any delight in him, whatsoever his pretences be, that I will have him in the utmost detestation, and will shew him no mercy; instead of my favours being towards him, my hottest indignation shall be incensed against him.

39 But

#### N O T E.

\* "The just shall live by faith" might be better rendered, as Dr Owen observes, (according to the order in which the words stand) "The just by faith shall live." (*δικαιοσύνην ἐκ πίστεως ζώσιν*.)

† That the persons intended in this last clause of the verse, are different from those

mentioned in the former, is evident to me, because of the opposition that, both in the prophet Habakkuk, and in this and the following verse, is made between them and those that "live by faith, and do not draw back to perdition;" but believe to the saving of the soul."

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

39 But as I have already told you, (*chap. vi. 9.*) that *I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation*; so we who are sincere in our profession of Christ, and are in truth before God what we appear to be before men, are not of the number of those hypocritical, treacherous and false-hearted nominal Christians, who revolt from him, and cast off their profession of him, to their own everlasting destruction: But we are of the number of those who *believe with the heart unto righteousness, and confess with the mouth unto salvation*, (*Rom. x. 10.*) and shall steadfastly persevere therein to the end as being *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, (*1 Pet. i. 5.*); and so, according to his promise, our faith stands in sure connection with, and shall certainly issue in the everlasting happiness of our souls.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How defective were all legal sacrifices! They, and all attending institutions, were, at best, only a shadow of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, and the blessings of the gospel introduced by him. The frequent repetition of those sacrifices was a plain proof of their imperfection; they could not prevent the return of guilt upon the conscience: nor could they possibly take away sin, or be pleasing to God for that purpose. But how meritorious and effectual is the sacrifice of Christ, who freely came into an incarnate state, according to ancient purposes and records, to fulfil his Father's will by offering up himself! This alone is sufficient for purging all that believe in him, from every iniquity, and recommending them to God's acceptance, as a people dedicated to his service; and for perfecting all that concerns them: And our great Lord is now exalted, as a priest on his throne, at the right hand of the eternal Father, where he must reign till all his enemies be subdued under his feet. And O what a blessed security have the people of God in him, and in the covenant of grace, which the Holy Ghost has recorded, with a view to gospel-times, in the writings of the Old Testament! It is now ratified, and all its blessings are purchased for them by the death of Christ, on whose account God will write his law and his gospel in their hearts, and will so thoroughly forgive all their sins, as never more to remember any of them against them. What rich encouragement then have we to draw near to God in Christ, with humble boldness, and full assurance of faith! Jesus our High Priest has opened a new and living way to the throne of grace, through his crucified flesh, and now appears in heaven itself to recommend us and our prayers to divine acceptance by the sprinklings of his blood, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit. But how watchful ought we to be against the beginnings of apostasy! If our love and zeal for every good work be in a declining state, and we grow cool and indifferent about attending on religious assemblies and gospel-ordinances, we have reason to fear, lest we fall after the example of some other professors of Christ, that have revolted from him: and the thoughts of awful trials, and of death and judgment, as near approaching, should excite us to the greater care herein. Ah! how extremely dangerous is the case of apostates, who, after they have been convinced of the truth of the gospel, vilify the Son of God, deprecate the blood of the covenant, whereby he was consecrated to the remaining part of his priestly office! and treat the Spirit of all grace with malignant contempt! As there is no other sacrifice for sin than that which they reject and despise, they can have nothing to expect, but judgment without mercy, and flaming wrath to consume them: And as their sin is more abundantly aggravated than any transgressions of Moses's Law, for which offenders were put to death, we must suppose from the reason of things, that they deserve a proportionally heavier vengeance; and we are assured from divine testimony, that the great God will assert his own prerogative, in calling them to a severe account for all their wilful abuses of gospel-light and grace. Alas! how dreadful is it to fall into the hands of his provoked power and justice, who lives for ever to inflict the sure punishment upon impenitent sinners! But whatever losses, troubles, or reproaches true believers may suffer for Christ, they ought not to cast away their humble confidence and joy in him, and their holy profession of his name; as being satisfied in their own minds, that they have a more substantial, and abiding inheritance in heaven. This is indeed a great recompence of reward, which the faithful God will give them according to his gracious promise; and the prospect of this, together with a remembrance of their former experience of divine light and support under their various tribulations for Christ, and compassionate regard to fellow-sufferers, should encourage their faith and hope, and animate their patience amidst further difficulties that may befall them: For in a very little time the Lord Jesus will certainly come by death and judgment, and will not tarry one moment beyond the set time, for their salvation.---Upon the whole

whole than, how wide is the difference between nominal professors, and sincere believers! One is in danger of drawing back to perdition, and falling under divine abhorrence; but the other is justified by faith, and by means of his faith lives to God here, and shall live with him for ever hereafter, as having believed to the saving of his soul.

## C H A P. XI.

*The apostle describes the excellent nature and efficacy of faith, 1,—3. Exemplifies it in several instances and effects, with an intimation of its necessity, from the fall of man to Noah's days, 4,—6. From Noah to Moses, 7,—23. And from Moses to the end of the Old Testament-dispensation, 24,—39. And concludes with a declaration of the still better state of believers under the gospel-dispensation, ver. 40.*

## TEXT.

NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen :

## PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to give you a summary account of the excellent nature and effects of all divine faith \*, inclusive of that which we have been speaking of as unto salvation, (chap. x. 38, 39.) It may be in general described after the following manner, True faith gives a sort of present subsistence in the mind and heart unto, and a confident expectation of, all future blessings, which on the foot of the promise of that God who cannot lie are as fully ascertained and realized to the believer's comfort, and have their proper influence upon him, as though they were already present in actual possession; and it gives us as clear and convincing a demonstration, merely on the credit of divine revelation, as to the truth of things that are invisible to the corporal eye; as though they were ever so plainly exhibited to our view, like the things that daily offer to our sight.

\* For by it the elders obtained a good report.

2 For by the realizing and evidencing exercise of faith, our godly ancestors of all generations, from the time of the first promise of the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head, (Gen. iii. 15.) to the end of the Jewish dispensation, obtained a noble testimony from God, though evil spoken of by wicked men; a record of which is left particularly with respect to some of them in his word, that they were righteous persons thro' the

## N O T E.

\* The description given of faith in this verse, and exemplified in the various following instances, I take, with the learned Dr Owen and others, to be a description of faith, inclusive indeed of that which is justifying, but not under the strict notion of it, merely as justifying: For this is only, as it has a regard to, and depends upon Christ and his righteousness; but here is no mention of him as the object of faith: and in several of the instances that are produced in the following parts of this chapter to exem-

plify it, there is no notice taken of him or of his salvation, but only of temporal blessings which were obtained by faith: And yet they may be all considered as so many proofs and evidences of the truth and efficacy of justifying faith in real believers on Christ, and of its more extensive exercise to the glory of God, and their own encouragement to go on in a course of dependence upon him, and obedience to him, amidst all the difficulties and dangers of every kind that surround them in this sinful world.

the righteousness of faith, and that they pleased God in their walk before him. (ver. 4, 5, 7.)

3 Thro' faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

3 As to the *evidence of things not seen*, which is one part of the description of faith, (ver. 1.) though by the light of nature we may justly conclude from the beauty and order of the creation, that there was a first cause of all its wonderful fabric; yet 'tis by faith in divine revelation, and by this only, as resting merely upon the authority of God therein, that we certainly and clearly know, beyond all that could be suggested by natural reason, that the upper and lower worlds, the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, were formed, fashioned, and finished, (*κρητισθησι*) by the all-powerful and effective word of God's command \*, who in framing their several parts, and setting them in their proper order, said, Let it be so, and it was so, (Gen. i. 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30.); *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*, (Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9.); and this he did unto the producing of all the visible things of the creation, such as the sun, moon, and stars, the earth, and all the objects of our senses, out of a confused *chaos*, which was created out of nothing, and, being covered with *darkness*, was without form, and void, (Gen. i. 1, 2.); and which *chaos* itself has now no apparent existence; all things being ranged into their due order, and made visible by the invisible power of God. (Rom. i. 20.)

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than

4 As to the other part of the description of faith, as *the substance of things hoped for*, (ver. 1.) it was by faith in God's appointment of typical sacrifices of atonement †, that *Abel*, the younger, but pious son of *Adam*, looking

#### N O T E S.

\* Though Christ is often spoken of as the word (*ο λογος*) and the worlds are said to be made by him; yet the expression here used is different from that by which he is denominated; and this word (*ρημα*) signifies a word spoken, but is never used for the person of Christ, who is styled *the Logos*; and so it is here meant of the word of command, as appears from the places cited in the paraphrase.

† A late learned writer observes, and supports it with just criticism, that the Greek word, (*πλεον*) in the comparative degree, signifies greater, or fuller, or more in number, rather than in value, in which last sense it is not used in the whole New Testament; and so it intimates that Abel brought more sacrifice, to wit, the *mincha*, or *meal-offering*, and an animal sacrifice, which was more than Cain did, who brought only the *mincha*, or *meal-offering* of the fruits of the earth. Accord-

ingly Abels offering is called in the plural number his gifts, at the close of the verse. (See Kennicot's discourse on the oblations of Cain and Abel, p. 197, 8, 9.) and in another place he adds, (p. 231.) "The Lord had respect to Abel, and also to his *mincha*, or offering," because accompanied with an animal sacrifice; but unto Cain, "and to his *mincha*, or offering, he had not respect," because he brought no animal sacrifice. This naturally leads us to conclude that Abel offered with faith in the great sacrifice of atonement, and Cain without faith in it; and so, if it cannot be certainly gathered from the more general use of the word, it may, from the nature of the thing, that Abel's offering was in reality, and in God's account, more excellent than Cain's.

than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by the same, being dead, yet speaketh.

looking forward to the promised seed, who should bruise the serpent's head, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) presented to God a greater and completer sacrifice than his wicked brother *Cain*, who offered only the *mincha*, or meat-offering of such fruit of the ground as came to hand, (*Gen. iv. 3.*) in acknowledgment of God, as the creator and governor of the world; but offered no atoning sacrifice in acknowledgment of his own sin, and need of pardon; while *Abel*, together with an offering of the best of that sort of fruit, offered also a bloody sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock, with the fat thereof, (*Gen. iv. 4.*) as a sacrifice, which under an humble sense of his guilt, and of his needing an atonement, he presented to the Lord with a believing reference to the lamb of God, or the great propitiatory sacrifice, which *Abel's* typified, and which the Messiah would offer for the remission of sin; by means of which faith he obtained a testimony from God in his own conscience, and by some visible token from heaven †; that he was justified through the righteousness of faith; God thereby manifestly declaring, that he approved and accepted of his sacrificial oblations, as having a respect first to *Abel*, and then to his offering. (*Gen. iv. 4.*) And by means of this faith, (the record of which, as well as of its acceptance, and of *Cain's* enmity to him on that account, is handed down in the word of God) *Abel*, though dead many ages ago, instructs us that, ever since the fall of man, the way of a sinner's acceptance with God is only through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ: and that the blood of innocent persons cries to heaven for vengeance to come down on the heads of their murderers, and especially of such as persecute them to death for righteousness sake, after the example of wicked *Cain*, who murdered his brother, *because his works were righteous, and his own were evil.* (1 John iii. 12.)

5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before

5 It was by faith that *Enoch*, the seventh from *Adam*, was by an extraordinary miraculous exertion of divine power and mercy, actually caught up in his whole person from earth to heaven, the habitation of God's glory, to enjoy him there in a state of immortality, for which his body underwent a refining change, like that which the bodies of the saints, that may be living upon earth, shall

#### N O T E.

† There was some token, by which Cain knew that *Abel's* offering was accepted, and his own rejected; and it was most probably by God's sending fire from heaven to consume *Abel's* sacrifice, as he afterwards often did in various other instances, (*Lev. ix. 24.*

1 Kings xviii. 38. 1 Chron. xxi. 26. and 2 Chron. vii. 1.) to testify his acceptance of the offering, and that justice seized upon the sacrifice, instead of the sinner who offered it, and for whom it was offered.

fore his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

shall pass thorough at the general resurrection from the dead, (1 Cor. xv. 51.) he being thus highly favoured of the Lord, that, like them, (1 Thess. iv. 17.) he might be exempted from dying, which in the *Hebrew* idiom is called *seeing death*, or sensibly undergoing it by such a dissolution of this mortal frame as consists in a separation of soul and body, according to the general law which has passed upon mankind for the first transgression, (Rom. v. 12.); and whatever inquiries and searches might be made after him, he was no more to be found in this world: *The eyes that had seen him, saw him no more*, (Job xx. 9.); because God had taken him by a peculiar indulgence to himself, to dwell in his immediate presence on high: For before he was favoured with this miraculous and happy rapture of soul and body up to heaven, he had a divine testimony in his own conscience, by a private suggestion or witness of the Spirit; and had afterwards a further public testimony given to him in the writings of *Moses*, that, before he was thus translated, he was accepted of God; and had, in an eminent manner of walking closely in communion with God, and in a course of faith, love, and holy obedience, (Gen. v. 24.) been highly pleasing to him, through the promised Messiah, of whom *Enoch* prophesied, saying, *Behold the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all*, &c. (Jude, ver. 14, 15.)

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

6 But without this kind of faith \*, as it was impossible for *Abel* and *Enoch*, so it is for us to do any thing in such a spiritual and holy manner, as is well pleasing in the sight of God: For whosoever he be that approaches to God in prayer, and in other acts of religious worship, in order to his finding acceptance with him, he ought, and it is absolutely necessary for him in the first place, to be firmly persuaded in his own mind, by that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen*, (ver. 1.) that, according to divine revelation, there certainly is a God, who, though invisible, has an eternal, necessary, and unchangeable existence, in distinction from, and opposition to, all the idols of the heathen, and all that are not *by nature God*, (Gal. iv. 8.); and he

#### N O T E.

\* As I cannot but think that *Enoch's*, as well as *Abel's* faith, had a respect to the promised Messiah, and that therefore the offering of *Abel*, and the holy walk of *Enoch*, were testified to, as acceptable and well-pleasing to God; so it seems to me that the faith here spoken of, with an immediate reference to these instances, as that, "without which it is impossible to please God," is to be

considered, together with the belief of his existence, as of the same nature with theirs, in its regard to God through Christ, though it be not expressed, but is only to be gathered from what was said about the assings of their faith, in things pertaining to acceptance with God to eternal life. And the whole context forbids our taking this to be the Heathen-creed, as some would have it.



he must further believe with that faith, which is the *substance of things hoped for*, (ver. 1.) that this infinitely perfect and blessed God himself is, according to his promise to *Abraham*, (Gen. xv. 1.) *the exceeding great reward of*, and a bountiful distributor of all the blessings of providence, grace, and glory, to those who, under a consciousness of their own wants and unworthiness, humbly, earnestly, and perseveringly seek his face and favour in Christ with their whole hearts, according to his word, in the diligent use of all the means of his appointment, and in a reliance on his covenant-promises, for all acceptance with him.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

7 By faith as *the evidence of things not seen*, (ver. 1.) *Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and was righteous* in his account, (Gen. vi. 8. and vii. 1.) and who, like *Enoch*, walked with God in all holy obedience, fully depended on the truth of the divine admonition which was given him, (*χρηματισθε*) relating to events of which there was no present appearance; as particularly that, for the wickedness of the people, God would bring a universal deluge to drown the old world, in which he lived; and that, of the whole human race, only he and his wife and three sons, and their wives, who as yet had no children, should be preserved alive: (Gen. vi. 12, 13, 18.) And being possessed with a religious awe and reverence of God, (*τολαβειν*) and fear of his judgments, he, according to his direction, and in obedience to his command, (Gen. vi. 14, 15, 16.) was excited to, and actually did prepare materials, and fit them for, and frame them into a large floating vessel\*, for the safe preservation, as he believed it would be, of himself and his family, consisting only of eight souls, (1 Pet. iii. 20.) that they might not be swallowed up in the flood: By which faith of his in the truth and power, justice and mercy of God, as revealed to him; and by his building the ark, in obedience to the divine commandment; as also by his discourse, as a *preacher of righteousness*, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) he both practically and doctrinally condemned the unbelief and disobedience of the rest of the world, that slighted all the solemn warnings, which God in his great long-suffering had given them by him, and by  
the

## N O T E.

\* The ark was nearly of an oblong square, with a flat bottom and sloped roof, as might be best suited to float steadily on the surface of the water. It was a vessel of three hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and thirty in height; and consisted of three

decks, or stories, capacious enough to hold all the living creatures, and sufficient provisions for them, that were ordered to go into this ark. (See *Univ. Hist.* book 1. p. 103. edit. 1.)

the strivings of his Spirit with them under his ministry, for an hundred and twenty years together, (*Gen. vi. 3.*); thereby leaving them without excuse, and vindicating the justice of God in bringing such a sweeping desolation upon them, for their obstinate and aggravated wickedness: And by his faith in the promised Messiah, for the spiritual and eternal blessings, which were to be brought in by, and found alone in him, (of which the ark, for the safety of all that were in it, was an eminent type) he, as to be an inheritor of salvation, was interested in that righteousness of Christ, which is received by faith, and imputed for righteousness, unto the justification of all that believe in him, without difference. (*Rom. iii. 21,—26.*)

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

8 It was by faith that the renowned patriarch *Abraham*, of whom the *Jews* boast, and from whom they derive their pedigree and all their privileges, and who is styled the *friend of God*, and the *father of all them that believe*, (*Jam. ii. 23.* and *Rom. iv. 11.*) when he had a call from God to go forth from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, his own native country, and to leave his idolatrous kindred and his father's house, and every thing that was dear unto him there, (*Gen. xi. 31.* and *xii. 1.*) and to remove to another country, which God would show him, even the land of *Canaan*, (*Gen. xii. 5.*) which he himself should receive, in right and title, by the free gift of God, (*Gen. xv. 7.*) and which his posterity after him, for generations to come, should receive in possession, as an inheritance, (*Gen. xii. 7.* and *Acts vii. 5.*) that was typical of a better in heaven; It was, I say, by a noble act of mere faith, that *Abraham* yielded a cheerful obedience to the command of God, as being fully satisfied, that what God had promised; his faithfulness, power, and goodness, would certainly perform in his own way and time; and thereupon he readily departed from his own country, friends, and relations, and set out for some other place, which God might direct him to; though, at that time, he neither knew the way to it, nor what country it should be; God, for the greater trial of his faith, and for putting the higher honour upon it, having concealed this from him till after he had left *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. (See the note on *Acts vii. 2.*)

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in

9 It was by faith, that he afterward wandered about, like a pilgrim and stranger, in the land of *Canaan*, which by this time God had told him was the land that he meant to give his seed for an inheritance, in the promise he had made to him. (*Gen. xii. 7.*) Here he sojourned

in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

sojourned, as one exposed to difficulties and dangers, but depending on divine protection in a foreign country, the inhabitants of which were quite different from himself, in temper, religion, and manners; he dwelling among them, not in any settled habitation, but in tents, which were fastened to the ground by stakes and cords, and were moveable from place to place, as occasions required; and which, under divine direction, he often took down in one place and pitched again in another, for the present accommodation of himself and family. And after his son *Isaac*, and his grandson *Jacob* were born, they lived with him in like tents, and in a like wandering state; even they, who, as his offspring, were heirs, together with himself, of one and the same promise, which God made to him and his seed. And as this was a lively emblem of the state of all true believers, who are pilgrims and strangers on earth; so the father of the faithful was well satisfied with his condition, as an unsettled sojourner, without any possession in the land of his pilgrimage, beyond a burying place, which he bought of the sons of *Heth*. (Gen. xxiii. 3, 4, &c. and xxv. 10. compared with *Acts* vii. 5.)

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

10 For God having said to him, *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward*; and having promised in an everlasting covenant that he would be *his God, and the God of his seed*, and that in *his seed*, meaning the Messiah, *all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, (Gen. xv. 1. and xvii. 7. and xxii. 18.) his faith, resting on those gracious words and promises of a God, who cannot lie, looked further than that earthly inheritance to the heavenly one, which was typified by it; and this he, in the exercise of his faith, most of all desired, ultimately expected, and firmly hoped to enjoy in that better state, which for its security, privileges, grandeur and glory, regularity and order, largeness and affluence of all sublime riches, honours and delights, may well be emphatically called a city; and which for its strength, firmness, and duration, in opposition to tents and tabernacles, and indeed in opposition to all the cities of this world, that are liable to be overthrown, and will moulder away by length of time, may be said, with the greatest propriety and eminence, to be built upon solid and immovable foundations; such as the unchangeable purpose and promises of God, and the merit and mediation of the promised Messiah, *whose day Abraham saw, and was glad*, (*John* viii. 56.) the contriver, former, and finisher of which ci-

ty, as its divine and only architect and creator, is no less than the great and blessed God himself, who, by his own infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, prepared it from the foundation of the world, to be the habitation of his own glory, and of all the saints with him for ever, (*Mat. xxv. 34.*); and so it is a *building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* (*2 Cor. v. 1.*)

11 Thro' faith also, Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

11 It was by faith also that even Sarah herself, (*אֲרָכָה שָׂרָה*) the beloved wife of Abraham, being recovered from her unbelief\*, which she manifested by laughing, when she first heard the promise of her having a son, (*Gen. xviii. 12,—14.*) was miraculously invigorated, and enabled, beyond all expectation, and all ordinary operations of natural causes, to conceive a male child in the common way of generation; and she was in due season safely delivered of a son, to whom, as her offspring, the covenant of promises to Abraham was designed to be fulfilled, (*Gen. xvii. 21. xxi. 12.*); and by faith she received this ability to conceive and bear a son, after she had all along been barren and dead, as to any power of this kind before, (*Gen. xi. 30. and Rom. iv. 19.*) and had now lived (being ninety years old, *Gen. xvii. 17.*) past the usual teeming age. This wonderful strength for conceiving and undergoing all the agonies of labour and travail unto the bringing forth of Isaac, was granted her, not for her faith, as tho' that were the meritorious cause of it; but by means of her faith, which was graciously owned and honoured, as she trusted in the Lord, that he, to whom nothing is too hard to do, as he told her, (*Gen. xviii. 14.*) and who

#### N O T E.

\* When Sarah first heard the promise of the Lord, the Angel of the covenant, that *she should have a son*, she, as well as Abraham, might probably take him to be only some stranger of the human race, who came with two others that way: It seems that she did not see him, the door of the tent being between him and her when he spake these words; and as they contained a promise of what appeared to her an impossibility in her circumstances, she secretly laughed within herself, in a way of deciding it: But when the Lord reproved her for such an incredulous manner of laughing, by which she perceived that he, who knew what she had done in secret, was more than a man; and when he backed his reproof with saying, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed will I return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah

"shall have a son;" then Sarah was afraid, as repenting of what she had said; and yet, in the fright, surprise, fluster, and hurry of her mind, denied it: But it seems that, upon the whole, and especially after the further discovery which the Lord, who spoke to her, had made of himself as *the true Jehovah*, in his conversation immediately afterwards with Abraham, she believed the promise, as given by him, who was able to make it good: And this is what our apostle refers to, without taking any notice of her preceding unbelief, which, together with her falsehood, was mercifully pardoned to the sake of that promised seed, the Messiah who proceeded from the loins of Isaac, the child she afterwards conceived and brought forth. (See and compare the account given of these things in the xviii<sup>th</sup> and former part of the xxi<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis.)

who is truth itself, and had made her a promise of a son, would faithfully perform it.

11 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable.

12 Therefore, in answer to her's, as well as *Abraham's* faith, there descended a vast progeny, even from his own single person by her; and *that* from him, when he himself, being an hundred years old, (*Gen. xvii. 17.*) was by reason of that great age accounted to be as much past begetting any children, as though he had been actually dead \*. And the prodigious multitude that, in succeeding generations, proceeded from his loins in a descent from *Isaac*, was, to speak in a proverbial way, as numerous as the stars of heaven, according to God's promise to him, (*Gen. xv. 5.*); yea, as he afterwards expressed it in another promise, (*Gen. xxii. 17.*) they were like the grains of sand on the sea-shore, which are past all account.

13 These all died

13 All these last mentioned believers, *Abraham, Sarah, Isaac* and *Jacob* †, not only lived by faith, which was

#### NOTES.

\* The resolution of the difficulty which arises from what is here said concerning *Abraham*, that he was *as good as dead*, and from his many years afterwards (as is generally thought) having had several children by *Keturah* another wife, *Gen. xxv. 1.* is attempted most commonly, by supposing that God miraculously renewed the vigour of *Abraham's*, as well as of *Sarah's* body, thro' their faith: and that this continued to *Abraham* many years afterwards — But Mr Hallet, in his supplement to Mr Pierce's paraphrase and notes on this epistle, supposes, and has taken a great deal of pains to prove, (and I think, with fair probability) that *Moses's* history of *Abraham's* marrying *Keturah* is not set in the exact chronological order, because he prudently chose to finish the account of *Sarah* and her son *Isaac*, without interrupting it with the affair of *Keturah*, which was foreign to this point, but proper to be afterwards taken notice of. This writer likewise gives several other instances, in which the order of time is not observed in the sacred history, as it frequently is neglected with good judgment in many other authors of note; and by comparing the several parts of the narration in *Genesis*, he concludes that *Abraham's* children by *Keturah* were really born before this which he had by *Sarah*. Curious inquirers may consult his very large and elaborate note on this verse; and if his thoughts be admitted, the whole difficulty for reconciling these passages is effectually removed at once.

† All these is not to be understood as including *Abel*, *Noah*, and *Enoch*: For *Enoch*

did not die, but was translated, that he should not see death, as had been said, ver. 5; and though *Abel* and *Noah* died, as well as lived in faith, yet they cannot be referred to by the words *all these*. For it is expressly said, ver. 13. of the persons here intended, that “if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned;” which can be applied only to *Abraham* and *Sarah*, who in their own persons came out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, (*Gen. xi. 31.*) and to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, who as reckoned to, and included in their parents, might be said to come out from thence, in like manner as *Joseph's* two sons, which were born in *Egypt*, were reckoned to the “souls of the house of *Jacob*, which came into *Egypt*,” to make up the number of threescore and ten. (*Gen. xli. 27.*) and as God speaks of *Israel's* coming out of *Egypt*, (*Hag. ii. 3.*) many ages after he brought their ancestors out of that land; and as *Abraham* and *Sarah*, so *Isaac* and *Jacob*, were said in our foregoing context, ver. 9. to be “heirs of the same promise,” to which, together with the promise of an innumerable seed like the stars, and the seed upon the sea-shore; ver. 11, 12. the promise, in the faith of which they died, most naturally refer: And as *Canaan* was an eminent type of heaven, and the *Messiah* was the great and capital blessing intended in the promise of the seed which should spring from *Abraham* and *Sarah*: so the faith in which they, inclusive of *Isaac* and *Jacob*, lived and died, ultimately respected the heavenly inheritance,

died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;

was their great support under all difficulties and trials; but their faith (as all faith that is of a right kind does) held out to the end of their days; and they died in a lively and comfortable exercise of it, with respect to blessings thereafter to be enjoyed by themselves in a better world, as well as by their posterity in this; they not having been actual partakers of the great and good things promised, neither for themselves, nor for their offspring, as they not only had not received possession of the promised land of *Canaan*, nor lived to see innumerable descendents from them; but, (which their faith principally pitched upon) as they were not yet arrived at the heavenly state of blessedness and glory, nor had seen the promised Saviour actually sent into the world, which was the great blessing ultimately intended and realized by faith in the promises: But they saw them, especially relating to the Messiah, by an eye of faith, as things which certainly would be accomplished, not immediately, but at a great distance of time to come; and they understood the meaning of them, and discerned something of the wisdom, power, grace, and faithfulness of God, that shone forth in the promises of them: And they were fully convinced and satisfied in their own minds, that they were the true sayings of God, and should infallibly be fulfilled in due season: And thereupon they fiducially and affectionately received, and joyfully embraced them, in their special reference to the Messiah, and to all heavenly happiness through him, as things of the most excellent nature and of the highest importance: And under this believing view, persuasion, and cordial reception of them, they freely and boldly owned, in word and deed, and were willing to have it publicly known, as is expressly recorded of *Abraham* and *Jacob*, (*Gen. xxiii. 4. and xlvii. 9.*) that they looked upon themselves, not as at home in this world; but as, in a spiritual sense, aliens and foreigners, whose hearts and hopes, interest and happiness were not placed on any of its concerns, and as travellers, like pilgrims, passing through the earth, even as in a literal sense, they severally were in the land of *Canaan*: All which was a lively emblem of the state of God's

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ance, which they looked for and desired, *ver. 10, 16.* as also the Messiah, <sup>1</sup> in whom "all nations should be blessed:" For we are told, *Gen. xv. 5, 6.* the place here referred to, that the Lord "brought *Abraham* abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou canst number them; so shall thy seed be and

"he believed the Lord, and he counted: to him for righteousness;" which the apostle interprets with relation to *Abraham's* faith in the Messiah for justification, saying "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (*Rom. iv. 3.*)

God's people in this world; every one of them may well say with propriety, as *David* did, *I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were,* (Ps. *xxxix.* 12.)

14 For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

14 For these ancient saints, and all who, with like faith in the promises, speak of themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, do hereby both professedly and constructively make it manifest to all about them, that, instead of setting their affections on this world, or rating their happiness by it, or wishing to have their portion and to live always in it, they keep in view, desire, hope for, and earnestly seek after their heavenly Father's country, (*ἡ πόλις ἡμετέρα*) a large and delightful place of abode, which, as his children by spiritual birth, is their own native home, where they shall dwell with him for ever.

15 And truly if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned;

15 And to shew that the country, which they so diligently sought, and were going to, was not their former home in another country upon earth, 'Tis very certain that, if they had been thoughtful about hankering after, and desirous to return to *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, their original country, and to their dear friends, relations, and possessions there, from which, in obedience to God's command, *Abraham* and his wife, and *Isaac* and *Jacob* (as included in them, and afterwards approving of what they had done) cheerfully departed to go into the promised land of *Canaan*, they had time and liberty enough, and might easily have found means and conveniencies for going back with safety thither; the way to it being short, and easy; and there being none that would have opposed the attempt.

16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

16 But now, even while they had opportunity, if they chose it, of returning to the land of the *Chaldees*, all their desire (as that of every true-believer does) tended to, and ultimately centered in, a nobler settlement in the transcendently more excellent world, that is of a different and sublimer nature, more satisfying, glorious, and abiding, than that country which they had left, and would not return to; or than that in which they now were strangers and pilgrims; or indeed than any other, the most pleasant that can be imagined upon earth; and this is no other than heaven itself\*, which

is

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\* This carries the highest evidence that the Patriarchs had a revelation and promise of a future state of glory in heaven: For otherwise they could not have looked by faith "for a city, whose builder and maker

is God," as it is said they did. ver. 10. Nor could they have had such notions of it, to engage their earnestly desiring and seeking after it, as we are here, and ver. 14. told they did. And though *Canaan* was an eni-

is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, (1 Pet. i. 4.) And as their hearts were so set upon their heavenly inheritance, in preference to all others; and their faith was the evidence of things not seen, as well as the substance of things hoped for, (ver. 1.) so in consequence of this, though not for any merit in it, God in his infinite condescension and love does not disdain, or think it any dishonour to himself, to be in a peculiar and distinguishing manner their covenant-God and Father; as he would, if he had nothing better to bestow upon them, than the good things of this world; and especially, if he left them in afflicted circumstances, so destitute of those comforts, as they were all their days: But he, on the contrary, counts it his glory to be their God, and to be claimed, and called upon by them, as such, and to be publicly known by this title in the world, as appears by his saying to Moses, (Ex. iii. 6, 15.) *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.* And he has given the fullest and strongest evidence of his being their God, and owning himself to be so: For, according to his special relation to them, and their faith and hope in him, he has graciously appointed, laid out, framed, and fitted up (στοιμασε) a glorious city of habitation for their whole persons, soul and body †, to dwell in with himself, even a *building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* (2 Cor. v. 1. see the note there.)

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that

17 Now, to return particularly to the faith of *Abraham*, in some remarkable after-actings of it under the most difficult and trying circumstances: When *Abraham* had in the forementioned miraculous manner obtained

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ment type of heaven; yet that I and itself could not be the heavenly country here intended; for this is called a better country, in opposition to that in which they were now pilgrims, and which they themselves never did enjoy: and God himself is said to be the builder and maker of the city, (ver. 10) which he prepared for them, in this heavenly country; whereas Jerusalem, in the land of Canaan, was built by the hands of men; and these patriarchs had no notice given them, that God would ever prepare such a city for their own possession; nor could they have any expectation that they themselves should ever enjoy it: But their faith looked to the heavenly inheritance, which God has prepared for them that love him,

† God's saying to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," long after they were dead, is alleged by our Lord himself, as a proof of the resurrection of the saints to eternal life, Mat. xxiii. 31. (see the note there) and so God's "preparing for them a city," includes a resurrection of the body to immortal glory, as well as the happiness of the soul in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity. Accordingly, some of the ancient believers are spoken of, as expecting to obtain a better resurrection, (ver. 35.) and therefore they, being the sons of God, might well be said to "wait for the adoption," to wit, "the redemption of the body," as the apostle speaks of New Testament-believers, Rom. viii. 23.



that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son :

tained a son by his wife *Sarah*, (ver. 11, 12.) and was, for the most eminent trial and proof of the sincerity and strength of his faith, love, and obedience, called to offer him up as a burnt offering to God, and to sacrifice him with his own hand, even his beloved son *Isaac*\*, (Gen. xxii. 1, 2.) He readily obeyed the divine order, so as in good earnest to resolve, and do what in him lay, to execute it, notwithstanding all that unbelief might have suggested against it ; and, having prepared all things for it, he would actually have slain him, as he was just at the point of doing, had not a counter command, by an immediate voice from heaven at that very instant, prevented it. (Gen. xxii. 11, 12.) And this great believer, who had been favoured with, and had embraced and firmly depended upon, the promises of what great and good things God would do for him and his seed, and especially upon the grand comprehensive promise, which was often repeated, relating to the coming of the Messiah himself through *Isaac's* loins, did nevertheless, by another act of faith on the supreme and disputable authority of God, as commanding it, freely resign and offer him up as a sacrifice to the Lord, in the manner before mentioned, even this his dearly beloved and only begotten son by *Sarah*, and the only son of his hopes, according to the promises, which were to be fulfilled by means of this son, or not at all.

19 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called :

18 Concerning which very son, God, to comfort *Abraham* at his being obliged to part with *Ismael*, said to him, (Gen. xxi. 12.) *In Isaac shall thy seed be called ;* thereby

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\* Though *Abraham* was prevented executing his design, in offering up *Isaac* ; yet he fully intended it, set about it, and would undoubtedly have done it, in obedience to the divine command, had he not been restrained at this critical juncture by a voice from heaven ; and his proceeding so far, as he did in the integrity of his heart, was accepted in the divine construction, as if he had actually slain him, as appears from the reason that is given of the prohibition in the next words ; for “ now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me,” (Gen. xxii. 9,—12.) — The enemies of divine revelation have made hideous outcries against this command of God, and *Abraham's* obedience to it. But though it would have been indeed a murderous act in *Abraham* to sacrifice his son, unless he had received a positive command from God for it ; and though, without this divine warrant, neither

his piety toward God, nor his natural affection, especially to such a son, would have suffered him deliberately to design and go about it ; yet as he was sure that God had commanded it, and as God has an absolute and uncontrollable right to order the taking away of any man's life by what means or instruments he pleases, by the knife or the sword, as well as by the pestilence and other diseases, what *Abraham* did, and was about to do, was every way both justifiable and commendable, as it was a mere act of the highest and most self-denying obedience to God's plain command. And this can never be drawn into a precedent, for any one, that has no such plain and express command from God, to take away the innocent life of another, any more than a private person can be warranted to kill another, without the authority of the civil magistrate, who has a right to order his executioner to put criminals to death.

thereby assuring him, that it was not by the son of *Hagar* the bond-woman, nor by any other of his own sons; but only by this son of *Sarah* the free-woman, (*Gal.* iv. 30.) that the promise should be fulfilled, which he had made of an innumerable posterity, that should be called to inherit both temporal and spiritual blessings, and particularly the great promise of the *Messiah's* proceeding from his loins according to the flesh, in whom his spiritual seed of all nations should be blessed, through faith in him.

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

19 But notwithstanding all those heavy damps upon his own love to, and believing hopes about this son of the promise, and all those seeming inconsistencies with the promise itself, which was the most touching and grievous trial of his faith that can be imagined, he made no difficulty of resolving, and attempting to do what God had commanded him, in this most unaccountable instance; he having reasoned and concluded (*λογισαμενος*.) in the exercise of his faith, that if he were to obey the divine order in sacrificing his son, God, to whom all things are possible, could easily raise him to life again; and, in case the promise could not otherwise be fulfilled, would certainly give him back to him by a timely resurrection, even from the dead; from whence, to speak in a figurative way, (*ἡ παρὰ τοῦ νεκροῦ*) he accordingly did receive him to life, who had been in the very article of death devoted to it, and given up as a dead son without the least hope to the contrary: And as he had before received him from his own and *Sarah's* dead bodies, as it were from the dead, so this was receiving him again in the similitude of a resurrection from the dead, and *that* as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and of the resurrection of true believers to eternal life, through him.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

20 It was by faith in the promise of God to *Isaac* himself, (*Gen.* xxvi. 4.) as well as to his father *Abraham* and his seed, and in the divine suggestion, which secretly directed his mind and lips to give forth prophetic predictions to his two sons\*, that he first, tho' unwitting-

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\* Though it must be acknowledged, that Rebecca's artful and fallacious management, to obtain the blessing for Jacob, (*Gen.* xxvii. 6,—14.) was by no means justifiable, or fit to be imitated in any other case; yet God over-ruled it, in his infinitely wise and holy providence, for fulfilling his own gracious purpose and promise relating to Jacob, as he did the conspiracies of the Jews against

Christ, for bringing about the great work of redemption by him, *Acts* ii. 23. And tho' Isaac, either not having heard, or not understood, or not duly attended to, God's declaration to Rebecca, that "the elder should serve the younger," (*Gen.* xxv. 23.) designed to bless Esau, as the first born, but through deception blessed Jacob, instead of him, *Gen.* xxvii. 21,—29, yet he might bles-

unwittingly as to *the person* he was then speaking to, pronounced, according to God's own sovereign determination, the chief blessing upon *Jacob* his younger son, which naturally belonged to the first-born, and included such as were both temporal and spiritual; and afterwards, he, by the same prophetic spirit, pronounced only the blessings of this world upon *Esau*; both which benedictions related to things, which he believed would take place upon their respective offsprings for generations to come, and which were accordingly fulfilled in covenant-mercies to *Jacob*, and temporal ones to *Esau*.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.

21 As *Jacob*, the covenant-son of *Isaac*, lived, so he died, in an exercise of faith on the promises of his God, who, by the angel of the covenant, *had been with him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil*, and who he believed would bring his posterity to the land of *Canaan*, and fulfil his promises to them. (*Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, 21.*) 'Twas by this faith, that the venerable patriarch, when, through the infirmities of extreme old age, he was very feeble, and drew near to the grave, prayed in a solemn manner for, and by a prophetic spirit foretold, blessings that should come upon his grand-children, *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, the two sons of *Joseph*; and designedly crossing his hands, under divine direction, so as to lay his right hand upon the head of *Ephraim*, the younger brother, who was placed at his left, and his left hand on the head of *Manasseh*, the elder, who was placed at his right hand, he pronounced a blessing upon each of them, distinctly declaring, in humble confidence, that God would bless them, that though both should be great, the younger should be greater than the elder, (*Gen.*

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bless him with faith in the promise which God had made to himself, that he would "make his seed multiply, as the stars of heaven, and that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed," (*Gen. xxi. 12.*) and he might bless Jacob, as firmly believing, that the immediate impulse he was under to bless the son then before him, was indeed from God, and that God would certainly confer the blessing which he was prompted to pronounce upon him in a way of prayer and prophecy. Accordingly, when he afterwards found, that, contrary to his own intention, he had blessed Jacob instead of *Esau*, his faith entirely acquiesced in it, saying, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed," (*Gen. xxviii. 33.*)—This prophetic benediction included spiritual, as well

as, yea, more than temporal blessings: For Jacob's whole life was full of troubles, and neither he, nor his posterity in general, had so much affluence of temporal advantage as *Esau* and his seed had. But Jacob's blessing was that of the covenant-birthright in Abraham's family, which included not only a promise of the land of *Canaan*, but also of the Messiah, and of the spiritual blessings which should be derived from him, as that seed of Abraham in whom all nations should be blessed. And therefore *Esau* is called a *prophane person*, which intimates an irreligious temper in him, for selling this birthright, (*Heb. xii. 16.* see the note there.) Accordingly, the blessing, which *Isaac* afterward pronounced upon him, *Gen. xxvii. 39, 40.* was merely of a temporal nature.

xlviii. 13,—20.) and so it was in the event, as it *afterward* appeared at the numbering of the tribes, when *Ephraim's* was found to be greater than *Manassch's*, (*Numb.* i. 32,—35.) ; and *Jacob* solemnly worshipped God\*, in the most reverent posture he could, by bowing his head, and supporting himself on the top of his staff.

21 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

22 To take notice of only one instance more in the period of time from *Noah* to *Moses*, It was by faith in the promise made to *Abraham*, (*Gen.* xv. 13, 14.) that *Joseph*, one of the darling sons of *Jacob*, whose faith held out amidst all the adversity and prosperity he had passed through in *Egypt*, when he drew near his end, recollected and reminded his brethren, for the encouragement of their faith, *which is the evidence of things not seen*, (ver. 1.) that though he, who had been their protector, was soon to die, and after his decease they would be exposed to great hardships and opposition from the *Egyptians*; yet God, in his appointed time, would surely visit them in his faithfulness and kindness, and bring them out of the land of *Egypt*, and carry them *unto the land, which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob*: And as he firmly believed this, so, in testimony of his faith concerning it, (*Gen.* l. 24, 25.) he strictly charged his brethren, taking an oath of them, to embalm his dead body, and preserve it in a safe repository, while they should continue in *Egypt*; and that whenever God should bring them out, as he surely would, from thence, and give them possession of the promised land, they should then take special care to carry his bones along with them, and bury them there; which order he gave in token of this hope of a resurrection to the eternal inheritance, of which the land of *Canaan* was a signal type, as well as that they would certainly be put into possession of that land.

23 By faith Moses, when he was

23 When, by the good providence of God, *Moses*, that great and eminent lawgiver, was born, who was to be

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\* This passage is quoted from *Gen.* lxxvii. 31. which we translate, "Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." But as the Hebrew word (*נָסָה*) rendered *bed*, signifies, according to different paintings, a bed, or a staff, the apostle speaks of it as a staff, and so it stands in the versions of the Syriac and the Seventy; and it seems from all circumstances most natural to take it in this sense: For, according to the history, Israel's bowing himself in a way of divine adoration, here spoken of, was before he was sick, and before he blessed Joseph's sons, both of

which are expressly said to be after that and some other things, *Gen.* xlvii. 31 and xlviii. 1, &c. And therefore he, most probably, was sitting either on his bed-side, or on a couch, or in a chair, under the infirmities of decrepid old age, which, in the whole, amounted to an hundred and forty-seven years, *Gen.* xlvii. 28. and, that he might pay his adorations in a bowing posture, he supported himself by leaning on the top of his walking staff, as not being able to do it standing, or kneeling.

was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

be a remarkable type of Christ, as the great ruler and deliverer of *Israel*, and the prophet which the Lord their God would raise up unto them, (Acts iii. 22.) It was by faith that his parents, the father concurring with the mother, concealed his birth, and kept him in some private place, till he was a quarter of a year old, waiting for a convenient opportunity to dispose of him in such a way as God might direct them to, for the preservation of his life in those perilous days. This they attempted by laying him in a sort of cradle, or open chest, made of bulrushes, and plastered with slime or pitch to prevent the water's soaking into it; and then lodged it in a cluster of flags, which grew on the brink of the river; where *Pharaoh's* daughter providentially coming, and seeing his beauty, and hearing his cries, was moved with compassion towards him, and took care of him, as though he had been her own child. (Ex. ii. 1,—10.) That which influenced his parents to cast him upon providence, in this manner, for his preservation was, because his countenance struck them with admiration, and engaged their tenderest affection to him, when they observed that he was an extraordinary beautiful child\*, and very promising, by his surprisingly amiable aspect, for some great eminence in his day; and so might prove the happy instrument of *Israel's* deliverance out of their hard bondage, which they believed would certainly be brought about by some *Hebrew*, whom God would raise up for that glorious purpose, according to his promises; and by means of this faith, and their fearing God rather than man, they, like the religious midwives, (Ex. i. 17.) were not afraid to run the risk of their own lives, by endeavouring to save the life of this son, and so exposing themselves to the wrath of *Pharaoh* for disobeying his barbarous edict, which he issued out †, commanding the mid-

wives

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\* *A proper child* (κατασκευασμένος) signifies an exceeding beautiful or comely child, and in Acts vii. 20. *Moses* is said to have been exceeding fair, (κατασκευασμένος) which, literally rendered, as we have it in the margin, signifies fair to God, and may intimate that he was "fair in the sight of God," or was of some divinely beautiful form, with an uncommon lustre in his countenance.

† At the time of *Moses's* birth, *Pharaoh's* cruel edict for killing all the male-children that should be born to the *Hebrews*, was in full force, and was, doubtless, executed as far as possible, with the utmost watchfulness and severity; yet as no subtilty or

power of man can prevail against the counsel of the Lord, whose kingdom rules over all; so he took care that the blood-thirsty design should not be brought to pass in cutting off *Moses*: And it is evident that afterwards, by the over-ruling providence of God, this commandment of the king was some way or other relaxed, or defeated; for otherwise the *Israelites* could not have so prodigiously increased, as they did, from the time of the birth of *Moses* to the time of his being sent to bring them out of Egypt; he being then eighty years old, as we are informed, Ex. vii. 7.

wives and all his people to destroy every male that should be born of the *Hebrews*. (Ex. i. 15, 16, 22.)

24 When this famous *Moses* himself grew up to maturity of stature, age and understanding, and to great attainments in wisdom, learning, and dignity, and so became every way truly great, (*αὐτός*) by the time he was forty years old; (*Acts* vii. 22, 23.) It was by faith in the promises made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, his covenant-ancestors, and in the invisible things of a better world, that he bravely despised and rejected the honours and advantages, even to his probably succeeding to the *Egyptian* crown, that might arise from being looked upon, owned and treated, as the adopted son of so great a princess as *Pharaoh's* daughter: (See the note on *Acts* vii. 23.) And he was desirous to be known by the despicable name of an *Hebrew*, notwithstanding all the hardships and disgrace which that people were then subject to, rather than to abandon their God and their religion, and to be spoken of and regarded under the high pompous title of her son: He accordingly quitted the court, and all its magnificence, and made the concerns of his afflicted brethren his own, as one who determined to take his lot with them;

25 Renouncing, with a generous disdain, all those tempting allurements to flesh and sense; because, in the exercise of his faith, he rather chose to undergo the severest sufferings and troubles with God's own peculiar people in their oppressed and calamitous circumstances, than to gratify the flesh with an enjoyment of all the grandeur, affluence, and sensual pleasures of a pompous, idolatrous, and luxurious court, which were all desiling, uncertain, fading, and perishing; which could be but of very short continuance, and could not be indulged without sinning against God, and thereby exposing himself to everlasting wrath and ruin.

26 Such was his faith in the *Messiah*, who should spring from the seed of *Abraham*, and be their Saviour, that, upon deliberately weighing, and putting in balance the worst of religion against the best of this world, he formed this account, that the heaviest contempt, scorn, and derision, with all the persecutions that naturally follow them, and were actually endured by the *Israelites*, or that could be inflicted upon himself for the sake of Christ and his faith in him, whom God would anoint to be the only spiritual and effectual Redeemer of his people, and on whom all their reproaches and sufferings ultimately fell, as he, their head, accounts them to be done to himself: (*Acts* ix. 4.) All

24 By faith *Moses*, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of *Pharaoh's* daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in *Egypt*: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

this, whatsoever others might think of it, he esteemed to be a richer gain for the glory of God, and the good of his church and of his own soul, than the greatest emoluments, products, and advantages of the fruitful land, and splendid court of *Egypt* could be to him, were they all in his own possession: For he by faith (*πίστις*) looked off from all those perishing riches, on one hand, and beyond all those temporal hardships, on the other; and found the sweetest support in his hope of, and looking forward to, the immortal crown of glory, which he realized, as reserved for him in heaven; and which he well knew would amply recompense, and abundantly more than make amends for all the reproaches, wants, and sufferings he might undergo, for the sake of a good conscience, in his pursuit of it \*.

27 By faith he forsook *Egypt*, nor fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

27 It was accordingly by faith in the command and promise of God, when he sent him to deliver his people out of the land of the *Egyptians*, and to bring them to a good land, (*Ex. iii. 8,—12.*) that, about forty years after† he had fled from the face of *Pharaoh*, into the land of *Midian*, (*Ex. ii. 15. and vii. 7. compared with Acts vii. 23,—30.*) he returned to *Egypt*; and when *Pharaoh*, under the heat of resentment at the many plagues which had been inflicted, said to him, *Get thou from me, and see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die*, *Moses* was so far from being terrified, that he replied with an unshaken boldness of faith, *Thou hast spoken well. I will see thy face again no more*, (*Ex. x. 28, 29.*) and thereupon he immediately departed from the presence of the king, and soon after took his final leave of *Egypt*, to lead the children

#### N O T E S.

\* This "respect to the recompence of reward," could not relate to an inheritance in the land of *Canaan*, as some would suggest: For *Moses* had no divine warrant to support his faith and hope of personally receiving this reward; and he was never suffered to enter into that land; but in case he had, he could not have expected greater treasures of an earthly nature there, than he formerly had the fairest prospects of in *Egypt*; and he could never think it worth his while to expose himself to the greatest reproaches and persecutions for the sake of an exchange of these. This *recompence of reward* therefore, which he had a respect to, is evidently the same with *the city, which has foundations, and the heavenly country*, that are spoken of, *ver. 10, 16.* as what his believing ancestors had looked for, and desired; and so shows, that he, as well as they,

had a revelation of, and had faith and hope relating to, a future state of happiness in heaven: And this is called *the recompence of reward*, not as though it were merited, or earned, by any one's faith, sufferings, and obedience; but as it is a rich gift of God, which he in infinite wisdom and grace freely bestows, for *Christ's* sake, upon his suffering servants in a return of blessings upon them, that over balance all their sufferings for him, and are thickly conferred upon them after all their trials are ended. (*See Rom. vi. 23. and viii. 18.*)

† This relates not to his first flight from *Pharaoh*, when, upon his having slain the Egyptian, he feared that *Pharaoh* having heard of it would slay him, (*Ex. ii. 14, 15.*) but to his second departure from *Pharaoh*, after he was sent to deliver the children of *Israel* out of their bondage, *Ex. vii. 2.*

children of *Israel* out from thence, defenceless and unarmed as they were; he not being in the least daunted by the severe threatnings of that haughty monarch; no, nor afterwards by his mad fury, when, like an enraged and merciless tyrant, he followed the *Israelites* with a powerful army to revenge himself upon them in their utter destruction. Nothing of this kind moved him, or made him afraid of going forward in obedience to God's command, (*Ex. xiv. 15.*) but he was bold and courageous, amidst all difficulties and dangers, while a mighty pursuing host was behind them, and the red-sea before them; and in the strength of his faith he said to the people, Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord: (*Ex. xiv. 13.*) For he endured the terrors of all outward appearances of unavoidable destruction in that situation, with steadfast courage and resolution, (*unperturbed*) as having as realizing views of God by faith, and as firm a dependence upon his goodness, power, and faithfulness, for deliverance, as though with his bodily eyes he had beheld him visibly present, to save them by his out-stretched arm, whom, in his own nature and perfections, which are all spiritual, *no man has seen, nor can see.* (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

28 Thro' faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

28 It was by faith in the promises, that God would bring his people out of *Egypt*, and in the promised Messiah, who should spring from them, as also in the divine institution of a standing, significant ordinance, that *Moses* himself, in obedience to God's command, observed all the rites of the paschal supper, and obliged the people *Israel* to do the same, which was afterwards to be a commemorative sacrifice, through all generations, of the Lord's passing over the houses of the children of *Israel*, when he smote the *Egyptians*; and was prefigurative of the redeeming death of Christ, who as the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot, was our *passover sacrificed for us*: (1 Cor. v. 7. and 1 Peter i. 18, 9.) And, by a like exercise of faith, he ordered that another \* temporary ordinance, annexed to the former, suitable to the then peculiar circumstances of things, should be carefully observed according

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#### N O T E.

\* Though sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb be significant, in a typical reference to the application of the blood of Christ, which is called the blood of sprinkling, Heb. xii. 14. and all the efficacy of which to our own salvation depends upon its being applied to us; yet it seems to have been but a temporary ordinance, suited to the then present occasion: For the feast

of the passover is spoken of, as a perpetual memorial and ordinance throughout the generations, (*Ex. xii. 14, 14.—27.*) and was accordingly kept in the most solemn manner every year; but we neither here, or any where else, read of sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb, either as appointed of God, or practised by the *Israelites* after this time.



ing to the command of God, namely, that the blood of the paschal lamb should be sprinkled upon the lintels and door-posts of the houses of the children of *Israel*, for their protection from the destroying angel; to the end that (ver. 10a) when he was cutting off all the first-born of *Egypt*, both man and beast, and should see the blood upon the houses of the *Israelites*, he might spare the first-born of both sorts that belonged to them. (Ex. xii. 7, 12, 13.)

29 By faith they passed thro' the Red-sea, as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

29 To conclude the account of the wonderful effects of *Moses's* faith, which brings the whole affair of *Israel's* deliverance out of *Egypt* to its final and happy period, It was principally by means of his faith, as depending upon the power of God to make good his word of promise, in a way of obedience to his command, that when he ordered him to lift up his rod, and stretch out his hand over the sea, he did so †; and thereupon the Lord, in a miraculous manner, caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and divided its waters, in so much that the *Israelites*, encouraged by this astonishing appearance of God for them, followed their leader, and went after him into the midst of the Red-sea, as upon dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left, (Ex. xiv. 16, 21, 22.) 'till they all passed over from the *Egyptian* to the *Arabian* shore, without the loss of one soul among them, (see Universal History, Vol. I. page 505, &c. in the note,) which the *Egyptians*, *Pharaoh* and his huge host of chariots and horsemen, attempting to do, as vainly presuming without a divine warrant, which *Moses* had, that they might succeed therein as well as the *Israelites*, were overwhelmed with the waters, and drowned by the sea's returning to its strength, and covering them, as soon as *Moses* stretched

#### N O T E.

† They passed through the Red-sea, relates to the children of *Israel*, who were spoken of in the preceding verse; but their passing through it by faith, I am strongly inclined to think relates chiefly, if not only, to *Moses's* faith, rather than to their own: For it is only the eminent effects of his faith, that the apostle speaks of all along before, from ver. 24. down to this verse, none of which exceeded, if any of them equalled this; and the generality of the *Israelites* are represented on this very occasion, as excessively unbelieving and murmuring, and no way commendable for their faith, whatsoever some few amongst them, such as *Caleb* and *Joshua* might be. (See Ex. xiv. 10.—12.) And yet upon what *Moses* further told them from

the Lord to silence their fears, and upon their seeing the waters miraculously divide at his stretching out his hand with the rod in it, (ver. 13.—16.) their faith was so far revived as to encourage them to venture into the broad open channel of the sea after him, who probably entered into it first as their leader: But then the deliverance was wrought, rather in answer to his faith, than theirs, in their passing through the Red-sea.—This was called the Red-sea, not from any redness of its waters or sand, as some imagine: but it took that name from its washing the borders of *Edu's* country, who was called *Edom*, which signifies red. (See Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. II. p. 90,—95.)

stretched forth his hand over it again, by a second command, which the Lord gave him so to do; and there remained not so much as one of them alive, (Ex. xiv. 22,—28.) ; which was a just retaliation for the edict that ordered all the male children of *Israel* to be drowned. (Exod. i. 22.)

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

30 To add another particular, or two, of the eminent fruits of faith, It was by means of the faith of *Josbua*, *Caleb*, and others, (in the afterwards more believing generation than the former had been) whereby they depended upon the promise, power, and veracity of God for giving them possession of the land of *Canaan*, that when, according to his command, the priests on the seventh day blew with the trumpets of rams horns, and the people gave a loud shout, the walls of *Jericho*, a fortified city, miraculously fell down flat to the ground, not by any efficacy in the blowing and shouting themselves, or by any human force whatsoever; but merely by the immediate power of God, which was exerted for that purpose, at the very instant of this appointed signal; and a breach was thereby made wide enough for the army of *Israel* to go strait forward, and enter into the city, and take it without obstruction. (See *Josb. vi. 1,—20.*)

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

31 It was by faith in the God of *Israel*, as the Lord of heaven and earth \*, who had given the land of *Canaan* to his favourite people, that *Rahab*, though she was a *Gentile*, and had been (רמפן) a whorish woman, escaped, together with all her family, the general slaughter which was made of the rest of the inhabitants of *Jericho*, (*Jos. vi. 21,—25.*) that obstinately disregarded, and rebelled against, though their hearts melted and were filled with terror at, the credible accounts which they

#### N O T E.

\* Here it may be proper to observe, that the efficacious lie, which Rahab the harlot told for preserving the spies, *Jos. ii. 4,—7.* was the effect, not of her faith, but of her sinful dread of the king's wrath. This lie of hers was by no means justifiable in any consistency with the eternal law of truth, and the confidence that ought to be maintained between man and man; but it was no more to our apostles' purpose to take any notice of this, in a discourse about the excellent and wonderful effects of faith, than it would have been to mention the *prevarication* and *falsehood* that were used for imposing upon *Isaac*, to procure his blessing for Jacob instead of *Esau*, (see the note on ver. 20.) or than to have mentioned *sinful infirmities*, that were mixed with the faith of other persons, who stand in this list. And tho', as Rahab

was afterwards incorporated with the church of *Israel*, and married to, and by that means became herself one of the ancestors of the Messiah, (*Mat. i. 5.*) we may well suppose, that then, at least, she repented, and believed in him for the pardon of this and all her other sins, and for justification to eternal life. Yet it appears to me that her faith here spoken of, and proved to be sincere by her care of the spies, related not to her spiritual and eternal salvation; (see the note on *James ii. 21.*) but only to the temporal safety of herself and family, as she really believed, according to the report she had heard, that the "Jehovah of *Israel* was the God of heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and had given them that land," (*Josb. ii. 9,—13.*)

they, as well as *Rahab*, had heard of God's wonderful appearances for *Israel*, and of his having assured them, and confirmed it by the miraculous deliverances and victories he had already given them, that *Jericho*, together with the rest of the land, should be put into their possession: (*Josb. ii. 9,—11.*) And when, notwithstanding all this, the *Canaanites*, through their disobedience and unbelief, sought to destroy the two spies, which *Josbua* sent to take a survey of the state of things among them, this pious woman gave evident proof of the sincerity and power of her faith, by receiving those messengers into her house, and entertaining them in a kind and friendly manner, and taking care of them, that they might not fall into the hands of their enemies, who, by order of the king of *Jericho*, made strict inquiry after them, that they might apprehend and kill them, or deliver them up to him. (*Josb. ii. 1, 17.*)

31 And what shall I more say: for the time would fail me to tell of *Gideon*, and of *Barak*, and of *Samson*, and of *Jephthah*, of *David* also and *Samuel*, and of the prophets:

32 And what further instances of the power and triumphs of faith need I add after all these that have been already insisted upon? It would be almost endless to recite, and enlarge upon the many others, that might be named. I shall therefore only just mention some of them, which from the sacred history ye may easily recollect: For it is more than my time, and the designed limits of this epistle would admit of, to go into a particular narrative of the faith of *Gideon*\* and its wonderful effects, who believed and obeyed the command of God to him, to throw down the altar of *Baal*, and cut down the grove that was by it, and build another altar to the Lord his God, as also to engage, with only three hundred men, the vast army of the *Midianites*, consisting of an hundred thirty-five thousand, in confidence of God's promise of victory, which was miraculously obtained only by the blowing of trumpets, breaking of pitchers, and carrying lamps, and giving a shout, accord-

#### N O T E.

\* The persons mentioned in this verse are not recited just in the order of time in which they lived, that being of no importance to the apostle's argument: For *Barak* lived before *Gideon*, and *Samson* before *Jephthah*, and *Samuel* before *David*; nor are the effects of their faith laid down in the following verses, with any exact reference to them in the same order in which he has here named them, as though the first of these effects were to be applied to the faith of the first of these persons, and the next to the second, and so on; nor are they all to be confined to these particular persons, much less are they all to be ascribed to any one of

them. It was sufficient that these noble effects of faith were found in one or other of the Old Testament-saints; and the apostle's promiscuously setting down several persons all-together by name, with an intimation of many more; and then reciting the products of their faith in a cluster of them, with only just mentioning them, was admirably suited to give us the more striking and affecting view of the efficacy of faith, as it appeared in these various fruits of it, and was found among so many believers; leaving it to our own thoughts to enlarge upon them as in the paraphrase.

according to the divine command, saying, *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon*, (Judg. vi. 14, 25,—27. and vii. 17,—25. and viii. 10.) And the faith of *Barak*, who, depending on God's promise by the prophets *Deborah*, obtained with only ten thousand men a glorious victory over the vastly superior and formidable army of *Jabin*, the *Canaanitish* king, commanded by *Sisera*. (Judges iv. 4, 7,—16.) And the faith of *Sampson*, who, being the judge of *Israel*, believed the Lord would be with him when his spirit came upon him, as a spirit of might and courage, and enabled him to slay thirty *Philistines*, and afterward, three thousand of those enemies to the State and to God himself, at his death. (Judg. xiv. 19. and xvi. 27,—30.) And the faith of *Jephtha*, who believed that God, who had delivered *Israel* from other enemies, and whose spirit came upon him, as a spirit of courage, would drive out the *Ammonites* before him; and the Lord delivered them into his hands, insomuch that they were entirely subdued. (Judg. xi. 23,—33.) And the faith of *David*, the man after God's own heart, and the most excellent king of *Israel*, who in times of the greatest danger trusted in the promises of God to bring him to the throne; and all along afterward, generally speaking, to his dying day, maintained a firm and humble dependence upon the Lord to fulfil his covenant with him. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1,—5.) And the faith of *Samuel*, that eminent prophet, who believed that there should be a performance of every thing which had been told him from the Lord, whether in a way of judgment or mercy, and that miracles should be wrought in confirmation of it, which accordingly came to pass, (1 Sam. xii. 16,—25.) And the faith of our holy prophets, too many to be particularly specified, which is recorded in the writings of the Old Testament, both with relation to the great things that some of them *did*, and others bravely *suffered*, under the power of it.

33 Who through  
faith subdued king-  
doms, wrought  
righteousness, ob-  
tained promi-  
ses, stopped the  
mouths of lions,

33 As to what great things *they did*, Some of them, by means of their faith, which animated them in the cause of God, reduced many nations into subjection to *Israel*, according to the promises made to them; such as *Josua*, who subdued all the kingdoms in *Canaan*, and *David*, who subdued the *Moabites*, *Syrians*, and *Edomites*, and other nations round about. (Josb. viii. 1, 2. and 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6, 11, 12, 14.) Others of them, from a principle of faith, not only performed acts of moral righteousness in their private capacities, but also ruled righteously in their public characters, as

did *Samuel*, while he judged *Israel*, and could appeal to the people for the equity and impartiality of his government, (1 *Sam.* vii. 15,—17. and xii. 3); and *David*, who in his public administration discountenanced every kind of iniquity, cut off all wicked doers, and set his eyes upon the faithful of the land, that they might dwell with him and serve him, (*Pf.* ci. throughout.) Others of them, by means of their faith in the promises, which God gave them of his remarkably appearing for them, and doing great things by them †, obtained the *actual accomplishment* of those promises. Others of them, through faith in God, as the only living and true God, defeated and put a stop to the rage of devouring lions; as *Daniel* did, when, for his fidelity to his God, he was cast into the lions den, but suffered no harm, (*Dan.* vi. 22, 23.); and as *David* slew one lion, and *Benaiah* another. (1 *Sam.* xvii. 35, 36. and 2 *Sam.* xliii. 20.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

34 Others of them, by means of their faith, as trusting in the Lord, and committing themselves to his sovereign disposals in the discharge of their duty, restrained and bound up the force and fury of flaming fire, as effectually for their own preservation from it, as if it had been actually quenched; an eminent instance of which we have in the three young men, *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, who, for their resolutely refusing to worship the golden image which *Nebuchadnezzar* had set up, were cast into the *burning fiery furnace*, *seven times hotter* than it was wont to be made, and after having continued for some time in it, they came out unhurt; insomuch that *not a hair of their heads was singed*, (*Dan.* iii. 13,—27.) Others of them, through faith in the divine protection, as attending the use of proper means, retreated, and got away from the reach and power of the sword of cruel tyrants, who sought to destroy them, as *Elijah* did from *Jezebel*, when she swore that she would take away his life. (1 *Kings* xix. 2, 3.) Others were recovered from sickness, as *Hezekiah* was, (2 *Kings* xx. 1,—7.) or being weak in themselves, and in comparison with the forces of their enemies, were nevertheless, thro' faith in their God, surprisingly

#### N O T E.

† The promises here meant seem to relate to particular promises which were made on special important occasions to several persons, such as those to *Joshua*, *Gideon*, and others, that they should gain remarkable and complete victories over the enemies against whom God sent them; and to *David*, that he should be raised to the

throne of *Israel*; and so their obtaining the accomplishment of the promises of this sort is no way inconsistent with his being said, ver. 39. that "they received not the promise." For that relates to the grand promise of God's raising up the Messiah, which was not fulfilled in their day.

surprisingly strengthened to maintain their ground against them, and even to overcome them: They grew amazingly courageous, bold, daring, and successful in battle; instances of which we have in *Gideon*, (see the paraphrase on *ver.* 32.) and in *David*, who trusting in the name of the Lord of hosts, slew *Goliath*, the monstrous champion of the *Philistines*, (1 *Sam.* xvii. 45,—51.) ; so that, contrary to all human probability, they, in the strength of their faith drove their enemies back, and forced the numerous armies of the nations of strange languages, and of different manners and religion, to flee before them.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

35 As to the *weaker sex*; Even pious women, by means of their faith, had their dead children miraculously restored to them by a resurrection to the present life again, as in the case of the widow of *Zarephath*, whose son was recovered from death to life by the faith of *Elijah*, whom she believed to be a prophet of the Lord, (1 *Kings* xvii. 13,—24.); and the *Shunamitish* woman, whose son also was brought to life from the dead, by the faith of *Elisba*, and that according to her faith. (2 *Kings* xiv, 18,—37.) All these are eminent instances of the noble achievements of faith, in the great things that were *done*, and the rich advantages that were obtained by it. And its power and efficacy is no less conspicuous in what others have been enabled to *bear* and *suffer* with holy fortitude, by means of their faith. Many believers were so strengthened and animated by their faith, as to endure the greatest tortures with exemplary patience, for the sake of a good conscience. They freely submitted to the severest torments, even unto death, by various methods of cruelty, (some of which shall be pointed out, (*ver.* 37.) as soon as we have taken notice, (*ver.* 36.) of another sort of trials that were sustained by faith.) These noble martyrs courageously endured the most *exquisite punishments* to the loss of life itself, and bore up with heroic faith and patience under them †; they rather choosing to submit to the worst of them all, than to accept of a release from them upon any dishonourable terms, as having in view and hope a blessed resurrection to eternal

#### N O T E.

† Tortured may refer, not to any particular sort of punishment, that was inflicted, different from those exemplified, *ver.* 37. which, as every one knows, must needs have been, most of them at least, extremely tormenting. And I rather chuse to take it in this light, than to have recourse, with the generality of interpreters, to the Apocryphal

books for instances of some peculiar sort of tortures; since all the other instances, referred to in this catalogue, might be collected from the authentic Scriptures of the Old Testament. (See Mr Hallet's supplement to Mr Pierce, whom I have followed in many of the particulars here referred to.)

nal life, which is incomparably better than any deliverance in this world from the greatest pains of death that could be inflicted upon them; and is every way better than a resurrection to a temporal life, which the sons of the two good women, but now referred to, received by means of the faith of their respective mothers, and of the two prophets.

36 And others had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment.

36 There were others of the faithful *Israelites*, who endured several trials of their faith in various ways, though not unto death; such as scornful, ludicrous insults, and ignominious derisions, (*μωχαλγῶν*) which cannot but grate upon generous minds, like those that *Isaac* met with from *Ishmael*, and *Elisba* from the rude and saucy children, or young men of *Bethel*. (*Gen.* xxi. 9. and 2 *Kings* ii. 23.) And others underwent the severe discipline of being unmercifully beaten and abused for their profession of, and adherence to their God; such as our Lord refers to, saying, Some that were sent to the *Jews*, were beaten or scourged: (*Mark* xii. 3, 5 \*.) Yea, over and above all this, there were some, who, for the same glorious cause, were enabled, by their faith, to bear with patience the heavy chains and fetters that were put upon them, and all the hardships of being thrown into jails and dungeons; such as *Joseph*, *Sampson*, *Micaiah* and *Jeremiah*. (*Gen.* xxxix. 20. and xl. 3. *Judg.* xvi. 21. 1 *Kings* xxii. 27. and *ver.* xxvii. 15.)

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

37 As to those that were tortured to death, not accepting deliverance, (*ver.* 35. see the note there,) some of them, through the steadfastness and lively exercise of their faith, gave themselves up to be stoned to death for their religion; such as *Nabith*, (1 *Kings* xxi. 13.) and *Zechariah*, the son of *Jehsiada*, (2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20, 21.) and those referred to by our blessed Lord, (*Mat.* xxiii. 37.) Others of them cheerfully underwent the cruelty of an execution, by their bodies being sawn through the middle †, a barbarity that was too often used

#### N O T E S.

\* Trial of *scourgings*, (*μαρτυρῶν*) is indeed a different word from that which is rendered, *Mark* xii. 3, 5. *beat*, and *beating*; (*ῥογαῖα* and *ῥογαῖος*) but they are sometimes used promiscuously, one for the other. (See, and compare the Greek in *Mat.* x. 17. and *xxiii.* 34. *Mark* xiii. 9. and *Acts* xvi. 37.)

† In this manner Jewish tradition (according to the Babylonish and Jerusalem Talmud) says, the prophet *Isaiah* was put to death by the order of King *Manasseh*, who was a wicked and inhuman, as well as an idolatrous prince, as appears from 2 *Kings* xxx. 1.

5, 6, 16. And *Jerom* on *Is.* lvii. 2. speaks of it as "a most certain tradition, that *Isaiah* was sawn asunder with a wooden saw." *Justin Martyr* also, in his dialogue with *Trypho*, (p. 349. Paris edit. 1636.) taxes the *Jews* with having expunged a passage out of the Old Testament, "relating to the death of *Isaiah*, whom they cut asunder with a wooden saw." And therefore this is the instance of that kind of death which the apostle is most generally thought to refer to.

used among the ancients. (2 Sam. xii. 31. and 1 Chron. xx. 3.) By the near prospects of such terrible deaths, as well as by various other trials, many confessors and martyrs were sorely tempted to deny their God, and worship idols, which (had they complied with the offers of their enemies) might have saved them from those calamities: But, through the vigour and steadfastness of their faith, they rather chose to suffer the worst that men could do to them, than to be guilty of such an abominable sin. Some of them, who continued faithful to their God, notwithstanding all the alluring and menacing attempts of the wicked to drive them away from him, were cut off by the sword of tyrants; such as the holy prophets of the Lord by the sword of *Jezebel*, (1 Kings xix. 10.) and *Uriah*, the son of *Shemaiah*, who was slain by the sword of king *Jehoiakim*, (Jer. xxvi. 20,—23.) And there were some noble confessors, who, though not put to death, were subjected to the greatest hardships in life: They were not permitted to have any settled abode; but were forced to sculk about, like vagabonds, from place to place; some clothed with sheepskins, and others with goat-skins, or rough garments with the wool or hair upon them, to keep them warm, and defend them against the inclemency of the wind, cold, and rain; such as the garments that *Elijah* and *John the Baptist* wore, (2 Kings i. 8. and Mat. iii. 4.) and they were contented with such mean covering, as being deprived of all other common conveniences and comforts of this life, as *Elijah* was, (1 Kings xvii. 6, 7. and xix. 4,—7.) and being pressed with many difficulties, and very ill-treated by various sorts of abuses, (καταφρονέοντες) as *Moses*, *David*, and multitudes of others were.

38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

38 They were looked upon, and dealt with by their enemies, as though they were the pest of their day, not fit for human society, or to be suffered to live upon earth; but, in reality, they were in themselves, and in God's account, such excellent persons, that the wicked men of this world did not deserve to have so great a blessing among them, as their holy conversation and admonitions, warnings and prayers might have been to them: In judgment therefore to them, as well as for the trial of their own faith, they, under the permission, direction, and care of divine providence, wandered about from one place to another for safety in obscure and solitary parts of the wilderness, like *Elijah*, who fled for his life from the cruel hands of *Jezebel*, (1 Kings xix. 3, 4.); and in uninhabited mountains, like *David*, who fled

fled



fled for his life from the persecutions of *Saul*, while he hunted him, *as one does a partridge in the mountains*: (1 Sam. xxiii. 14, — 26. and xxvi. 20.) And sometimes they were forced to betake themselves to holes and caverns of the earth, the usual receptacles of wild beasts, to hide themselves from the wilder rage of blood-thirsty men, as *David* did to the cave of *Adullam*, (1 Sam. xxii. 1.) and as an hundred prophets of the Lord were hid in caves by *Obadiah*, and as *Elijah* concealed himself in a cave to escape the fury of the wicked *Jezebel*, (1 Kings xviii. 4. and xix. 9.); but their faith supported them under, carried them through, and made them victorious over all these severities and hardships.

39 And these all, having obtained a good report thro' faith, received not the promise:

39 And all these ancient saints and servants of God, as was said in our entrance on this discourse concerning them, (ver. 2.) have received an honourable testimony from him (*μάρτυρες*) in their respective generations, and in the infallible records of the sacred oracles, that are handed down to us, relating to the signal obedience, sufferings, and achievements, which they were animated to by means of the steadfastness and lively exercise of their faith, which not only realized, and trusted in the promises and providence of God, with respect to their particular circumstances; but many of them, at least, relied upon the great promise of the Messiah, which they embraced by faith, and had the benefit of, for the salvation of their own souls; and yet never received the actual accomplishment of this promise itself \*, so as to live to see the exhibition of Christ in the flesh to fulfil the work of redemption, and introduce all the glories of the gospel-state, that depended upon it, and were consequent to it.

40 God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

40 The reason why God in his infinite wisdom, and sovereign pleasure, did not fulfil the promise of the Messiah in their days was, because he had a fore-view to, (*πρὸ βλεψαμένου*) and has accordingly provided for us, who believe in Christ as now actually come in the flesh, this better thing †, than they were favoured with in their

#### N O T E S.

\* The promise here intended, I take to be the eminent and all-comprehensive promise of Christ, which was made immediately after the fall to our first parents, and afterward to Abraham, relating to his seed, in whom all nations should be blessed. This promise, because it was frequently repeated to him, is called the promise that he received, ver. 17.; and this was the grand promise, in which all the promises of grace center, and on which the faith and hope of the Old Testament-be-

lievers rested, and which the apostle seems to have had much in his eye in several of the forementioned instances.

† I can by no means think, as some would persuade us, that "the better thing provided for us," relates to our souls being received into heaven, upon their leaving the body, which they suppose the believers who lived before the coming of Christ were not admitted to; but that their death was a state of insensibility. They accordingly interpret those passages,

their state of nonage under that preparatory dispensation, to the end that, (*na*) as *the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God*, (chap. vii. 19.) to their state of religion, worship, and privileges, (*Luke x. 24.*) might not be perfected, without the exhibition of Christ in the flesh, which they desired, and we now have been favoured with; nor without his blood, righteousness, and grace, which appear in all their light and glory under the gospel-dispensation, that ensued upon his coming for *our* redemption and eternal salvation, as well as *theirs*, that, *through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we might be saved even as they.* (*Acts xv. 11.*)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a noble grace, and how extensively useful is faith! It as certainly believes the reality even of invisible things, merely upon a divine testimony, as if it had ocular demonstration of them; and as effectually gives the objects of hope an existence in the mind as if they were actually present. And what an honourable testimony has God given in his word to the faith of the Old Testament-saints for the encouragement of ours, who live under a dispensation of much clearer light and grace! The record of his accepting *Abel* and his offering, as presented by faith with an eye to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, points us to the only way of a sinner's acceptance, as righteous through faith in him, and so he, being dead, still bears witness to this important point. What high favour does God shew to faithful believers, while he executes righteous judgments on the ungodly world! Unless we realize him by faith as the only living and true God, and as in Christ the gracious rewarder of those that earnestly seek him, 'tis impossible for us to please him. And how justly are they condemned and destroyed, like the old world, who, notwithstanding all God's warnings and long-suffering, persist

in

### N O T E.

passages, that speak of their being "no remembrance of God, nor praising him in the grave," and the like, as meant of the whole person, which may very naturally relate only to the body, much in like manner as the resurrection from the dead, at the great day, signifies only the resurrection of the body, and not of the soul. And surely the Psalmist expected an admission to heaven immediately after his death, when he said, (*Pf. lxxiii. 24.—26.*) "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart fails; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." And Solomon, speaking of death, said, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it," (*Ecc. xii. 7.*) Accordingly Moses, who was not translated as Enoch and Elias were, but died, (*Deut. xxxiv. 5.*) appeared with Elias in the mount of transfiguration, *Mat. xvi. 3.* which was before the death and resurrection of our Lord, when,

as these gentlemen fancy, he awakened the souls of all the good men that had died before him. Christ also in the days of his ministry spake of the angels having carried Lazarus into Abraham's bosom when he died, (*Luke xvi. 22.*) And he argued from God's calling himself "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," that they were then living in their souls, as well as should have a resurrection to eternal life; since "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for they all live to him," which supposes a continual living existence of their souls in a state of happiness. (*See Luke xx. 37, 38. and the note on Mat. xxii. 32.*) And our apostle says, in the chapter before us, ver. 16. "They desired a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." (*See the note there.*) This therefore cannot be the "better thing" that he has prepared for us: but it must relate to something more peculiar to the gospel-state.

in their iniquities ! But as to those who, like *Enoch* and *Noah*, walk with God, as heirs of the righteousness of faith ; and, like *Abraham*, readily obey his commands, when he calls them to leave all earthly kindred and enjoyments, and resign themselves up to his disposal, He, in performance of his promises, sometimes works wonders of providence for them, and will surely give them an eternal inheritance in the glorious heavenly city of immovable foundations, which they are seeking and looking for, and God himself is the builder of, and has prepared for them. They may indeed expect to meet with great trials, in the way, though not equal to that of *Abraham*, when he was ordered to offer up his only begotten son. But what sweet supports does faith give under them ! And how loose should they sit from this world, as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, that are desiring and travelling toward heaven as their proper home, and incomparably better country than any on earth ! While faith looks at the blessed recompense of reward, it fortifies us against the fear of man, and all the terrors of death ; and makes us choose Christ, and even a suffering lot with his people, rather than all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this transitory world, in hope of a resurrection to eternal life. — With what sovereign grace, does God give faith to some of the most infamous characters, like *Rahab* the harlot, and save them, while others, like the rest of the people at *Jericho*, are left to perish for their disobedience and unbelief ! How numberless, and in a manner, endless are the instances of the power of faith for exemplary suffering, as well as doing great things, with strength and courage in the name of the Lord ! And how different is God's account from that of ungodly sinners, concerning eminent saints ! Though the wicked and prophane think them not worthy to live, God often thinks them too great blessings to continue long among them. And how much greater helps have we to our faith under the New Testament-dispensation, than Old Testament-believers had for theirs ! Christ, and all the blessings of the gospel, are now exhibited in their full light and glory, that we might enjoy the most perfect state of gospel-worship, privileges, and advantages on earth, till the whole scheme of divine wisdom and love shall be finished in heaven. Then we, together with Old Testament-believers, shall be perfected for ever. O may the strength and activity of our faith exceed theirs, in proportion to our richer means and advantages ! And may we die, as well as live, in vigorous exercises of it !

## C H A P. XII.

*The apostle from the preceding account of the faith of Old Testament-believers, under all their difficulties, exhorts the Hebrews to constancy and perseverance in faith and patience, under all their trials and afflictions ; and, still further to encourage them thereunto, sets before them the more eminent example of Christ, and the gracious design of God in all the sufferings they endure, 1,—13. Recommends to them peace and holiness, and cautions them against adding a profane part, like Esau, in despising spiritual blessings, 14,—17. And enforces his argument by a consideration of the much greater excellency of the New, than the Old Testament-dispensation, 18,—29.*

## TEXT.

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great

## PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore, from the foregoing instances of the excellency and power of faith to support under, and triumph over all difficulties and dangers, it appears that we are surrounded with authentic records of vast multitudes

a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

titudes of believers \*, who unite in their testimony to the duty and rich advantage of relying entirely upon the infinite wisdom, power, faithfulness and goodness of God, according to his word, how great soever their trials and afflictions were, let us in imitation of, and animated by, their memorable and encouraging example, as though they were looking on, as eye-witnesses of our behaviour †, be like racers, who strip themselves for running; let us, in the exercise of faith and self-denial, *cast off the works of darkness*, (Rom. xiii. 12.) and all inordinate affections to, and cares about the things of this world, and lay aside all observances of the ceremonial law, that entangling yoke of bondage, and every thing else that would be a clog upon our holy profession, and a heavy damp upon our spirits, and hindrance to our progress in our Christian course and tendencies heaven-ward; and let us endeavour with full purpose of heart, by divine grace, to disentangle ourselves from the power of original corruption, and of every sin, which, either through natural constitution under our native depravity, or through our peculiar circumstances, company, and situations in life, we are most liable and exposed to, and in danger of being overcome by, and which is ever at hand (*εὐεπίστατος*) to embarrass and hinder us in our spiritual concerns; and especially the great sin of unbelief, which is the root of all apostacy, (*chap. iii. 12.*) and stands in direct opposition to that eminent faith, which, as has been shown, (*chap. xi.*) our famous ancestors exercised upon all occasions, and particularly when they were called to *do and suffer* the will of God in the most trying instances: And being thus disencumbered from every load, and hindrance, from temptation without, and corruption within, let us

lay

#### NOTES.

\* A cloud, as Grovius, Dr Owen, and others have observed, was a metaphor often used by ancient writers to signify a great multitude; and we have instances of its being so used in the sacred Scriptures, as in *Is. xlv. 22.* and *Is. lx. 8.* and *Ezek. xxxviii. 9, 16.* It may be taken as a strong figurative expression of great companies, in allusion to the innumerable drops of water that are collected together into a thick and refreshing cloud; and, perhaps, the allusion may be to the cloud of glory that encompassed Israel, and was a shining light to them in the wilderness.

† Here, and in the remainder of this verse, is an evident allusion to the custom of those days, in which, among other exercises, races were wont to be run; and they that were en-

gaged therein, took care to have as little weight to carry as possible, and to put off all such clothes, as by their weight, length, or otherwise, might incommode or hinder them in their course. (See the note 1 Cor. ix. 24.) It is notorious that these sorts of public exercises were very frequent in the Grecian and Roman games, which the Hebrews could scarce be ignorant of; and, in imitation of these, Herod Agrippa had, before the writing of this epistle, built a theatre and amphitheatre at Jerusalem, and instituted public games to be celebrated with great magnificence, in honour of Claudius Cæsar, who advanced him to the kingdom of Judæa. (Vile Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. cap. 8. sect. i. et de Bel. Jud. lib. i. cap. 2. sect. 2. Ed. s. Hudc.)

lay ourselves out, in the exertion of our Christian-principles, unto an exercise of persevering fortitude, quietness, and patient resignation to the holy and sovereign will of God, under our manifold sufferings; and hold on our way, in running with speed, steadiness, and vigour, till we finish our course of faith, and of the affliction, and unreserved obedience, which is appointed to us of God, and marked out in his word, and in the example of the forementioned worthies, together with the glorious issue that we may *press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* (Phil. iii. 14.)

<sup>a</sup> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 In running this Christian-course, as ever we would finish it well, let us, like racers that look forward, be continually (*ἀποσπορῶντες*) looking off from sin, and self, and the allurements and terrors of this world, and from every thing that would pull us back and dishearten us; and be looking forward by faith to Jesus, the suffering Saviour, that we may derive grace and strength from him, to enable us to follow his most perfect pattern, who is not only a matchless example, but the efficient cause, (*ἀρχηγός*) leader, conductor, and captain of our faith, to begin it in us, and to encourage, increase, carry on and perfect it, and at length to crown it with all its blessed fruits and effects, in virtue of his meritorious sufferings and death; who had an assured prospect of the great and glorious things that should be brought about thereby, and were the rejoicing of his soul, (*John* xiii. 31, 32.); such as the satisfaction of divine justice and the advancement of the glory of all God's perfections, and of his law and government, with united harmony, in the reconciliation and eternal salvation of the many sons that he should bring to glory; as also of his own personal exaltation, when he himself should be crowned with glory and honour, (*Heb.* ii. 9, 10.); all which were proposed to him, for his encouragement and reward, in the eternal covenant between his Father and him, and in the promises and prophecies answerable to it, (*Is.* liii. 10,—12.) In the foreview, faith and hope of all this joy, he calmly submitted to, and with astonishing meekness and patience endured the agonies and lingering pains of his crucifixion, (see *1 Pet.* ii. 23. and *Luke* xxiii. 34.); and, with a truly heroic greatness of soul, he overlooked all the ignominy and reproach of that scandalous sort of death, and all the taunts and jeers which attended it; and thought of them with sovereign contempt, as not worth regarding, though he was therein exposed to open shame, as if he had been  
the

the most despicable, as well as infamous of criminals. And now, in consequence, and as the just reward of all this, he, in that very nature in which he suffered, is exalted, as a triumphant conqueror over sin, Satan, and the world, death and hell, to a state of perfect rest from all his former sufferings and disgrace, and to the highest honour, dignity, and authority; which, to speak in a figurative way, may be called his sitting down at the right hand of the throne, where God the Father illustriously shines in all his glory. (See the note on *Acts* vii. 55.)

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

3 To help you therefore against discouragements under all your tribulations and apprehensions of danger, ye ought carefully to consider, reflect upon, and compare all circumstances, (*αναλογισασθε*) relating to the person of Christ, and his extreme sufferings, together with the invincible patience and undisturbed composure of mind with which he bore up under, passed through, and triumphed over, all the opprobrious opposition, and cutting blasphemous insults, that the most malicious and wicked men belched out to his very face, against his holy and divine person and office-authority, doctrine and miracles, all the days of his public ministry, and especially towards, and at his death: Ye ought also to compare these with their glorious fruits to himself and to you, and with the infinite disproportion there is between you and him, and between the worst that ever did, or can come upon you, and the inexpressibly more severe and complicated trials that met upon him. Let all these things be weighed and set in opposition one to the other, (*ισα μιν*) to the end that ye may not sink and fail, be tired out, and lose all patience and firmness of mind in your holy profession, so as to think it an irksome task; much less to throw it up, by reason of the troubles and afflictions, that may befall you for his sake, who so willingly sustained all this for yours.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

4 Though the violent seizure of your goods, and the loss of liberty and property, which ye have cheerfully resigned for the sake of Christ, in hope of a better inheritance in heaven, (*chap. x. 34.*) are indeed very trying to flesh and sense; yet it ought to be considered, that this, and all your other persecutions hitherto have been so far restrained by the indulgence of providence, as not to cost you your lives or the shedding of your blood, as they did many of the Old Testament-saints before-mentioned, and your great Lord and Master himself, in their conflicts with the adversaries that opposed them, and tempted them, as yours do you, to sin against God. It

would

would therefore be a dangerous, as well as shameful cowardice for any of you to flinch, and desist from your Christian-course, on account of the lesser difficulties and losses which ye meet with, (*αντισταμεν*) in contending against sin and sinful men, as antagonists who set themselves, like combatants, in opposition to you, and strive to defeat and foil you; as, in contests for victory, one endeavours to do against another,

3 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

5 And can ye be unmindful of \*, as they certainly are who faint under their trials? Or are ye, like them, so insensible and inadvertent, as not to remember, and be affected with that gracious and encouraging exhortation, which is directed to, and (*διευκρινεται*) reasons with all and every one of you, who are true believers, as with persons under the endearing relation and character of the children of God, in which he, as your heavenly Father, speaks with all tenderness by *Solomon*, which is applicable for your direction, caution, and comfort under every tribulation? (*Prov. iii. 11.*) My heaven-born and adopted Son, who art the object of my peculiar care and affectionate love, have a care, on one hand, of slighting or taking no notice of, or being not suitably affected with the corrections which the Lord your God and Father sees fit, in the disposals of his wise and holy providence, to lay upon you for your (*παισιας*) instruction: Far be it from you to treat them with neglect and contempt, as if no good could be answered by them; or to behave like a stubborn, hardened, and incorrigible child, under his father's chastening for his faults, to reclaim and reform him, as though you resolved to take your own course, and would neither bow under, nor hearken to the rod, and who has appointed it. (*Mick. vi. 9.*) And, on the other hand, as you should seriously consider, that, whosoever be the instruments of your troubles, God has a holy, sovereign, and over-ruling hand in them, and has wise and gracious designs in appointing and permitting them; so you ought to take heed, lest, through impuience, fretfulness, or misconstructions of his dispensations, and the workings of unbelief, you shrink and be disheartened, to the neglect of duty; or despair of relief, and refuse to be comforted under his reproofs.

6 For whom the Lord loveth he

6 For what the Lord does herein, is so far from being a token of his hatred of you, (as fainting souls are apt

#### N O T E.

\* "Ye have forgotten the exhortation," interrogatively, "have ye forgotten?" And according to a different pointing of the sentence, which is arbitrary, may be rendered both senses are taken into the paraphrase.

he chasteneth,  
and scourgeth e-  
very son whom he  
receiveth.

apt to conclude against themselves) that, on the contrary, your being exercised with it, and patiently bearing it, may be justly construed and improved into an argument of his great kindness for you, that iniquity may not be your ruin, according to what immediately follows in *Solomon's* admonition, (*Prov. iii. 12.*) where he says of those, for whom the Lord has a special favour, as for his own dear children, He for wise and holy reasons exercises them, more or less, with various afflictions, not in a way of law-wrath, for the satisfaction of his justice, which is borne by Christ for them, (*ver. 2.*) but in a way of fatherly chastisement for their iniquities, in order to their being purged from them, (*Isa. xxvii. 9.*); and he lays the rod of correction (*μαστιγας*) with the heavier hand, when there may be occasion for it, upon every one, whom he receives into the relation of a son, and whom he accepts, and takes care of, as such, that he may prepare him for, and, at length, receive him to himself in a better world.

7 If ye endure  
chastening, God  
dealeth with you  
as with sons: for  
what son is he  
whom the father  
chasteneth not?

7 So that, if ye be not only visited with, but are also enabled, with faith, patience, and perseverance, humbly to submit to, and bear up courageously under such afflictions of any sort, as God in his providence permits, or orders, or measures out unto you, He therein (*παροτρυνει*) presents himself to you, not in a hostile manner, like an enemy, but with a benevolent disposition and design, like a kind of parent, who has your true welfare at heart; and only takes the same course with you, as a prudent father uses, and indeed ought to go into, in dealing with his own children: For where is the son, whom an earthly father, that is good, wise, and faithful, does not correct, with due moderation, for his faults, to reclaim him from them, when he observes that they loudly call for it? And where is the child of God, in whom there is nothing offensive that needs mending, and whom his heavenly Father does not seasonably chastise, that he may not, like foolishly fond parents, spare the rod and spoil the child, when, in his infinite wisdom and love, he sees that there is need of it for answering some valuable purposes of his own glory, and its spiritual improvement, while it is in this imperfect state, and training up for heaven?

8 But if ye be  
without chastite-  
ment, whereof all  
are partakers, then  
are

8 But if, notwithstanding all that is amiss in you, and your remaining propensity to evil, ye were to be indulged with uninterrupted ease and prosperity in the world, without any rubs in your way, or any mixture of troubles, as the corrective and instructive chastenings of the Lord, with which all his children, even

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the most eminent of them, have been, are, and will be visited one way or other, though in different degrees; and if ye have not been brought to submit to this wholesome and needful discipline of his family, ye might then justly be looked upon, and indeed would be dealt with in a way of divine neglect, as a spurious brood, and not the true genuine sons of God, and heirs of the eternal inheritance, *who are chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world*, (1 Cor. xi. 32.) For he says of the false-hearted professor, as he did of backsliding Ephraim, *he is joined to idols; let him alone*, (Hosea iv. 17.)

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?

9 It may also be of use for you further to consider, in what a better manner, with what superior authority, and to what better purpose, the chastenings of your heavenly Father are managed, than those inflicted by earthly parents that ye may be more submissive to him, than, as in duty bound, ye ever were to them therein. It is a common case with us all, that, in the days of our minority, our fathers from whom we derived our frail, corrupt, and mortal bodies, as they were the instruments of begetting them, and by whose care and expence, under divine providence, we received all things for their support and comfort, took occasions to correct us for our misdemeanors; and we had, or ought to have had, such a sense of their authority over us, as to show a reverential and dutiful regard to them, by bowing, and yielding to their paternal discipline for our instruction, and correction; and by submitting to the rod, confessing our crimes, and taking heed not to offend them any more, nor to love them, or think they loved us the less, because they corrected us: This certainly became us \*; and is not there much higher reason for us to own the supreme and sovereign authority of our heavenly Father who is *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, (Numb. xvi. 22. and xxvii. 16.) as he is the immediate Creator, preserver and governor of our rational and immortal

## N O T E.

\* The antithesis between the "fathers of our flesh, and the Father of our spirits," shows, that our earthly fathers are only the instruments of the generation of our bodies, and that our souls are not *ex traduce*, or by derivation from them; but that they are created by the immediate power of God, and infused into the body, from age to age, as the soul of our father Adam was in his production, when God "formed his body of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a

"living soul," (Gen. ii. 7.) And, as to the souls of his descendants, "the breath of the Almighty has given them life, (Job xxxiii. 4.) they are "the souls that he has made," (Isa. lvii. 16.) he is also spoken of in the present tense, as the God who "formeth the spirit of man within him," (Zech. xii. 1.) and Solomon, speaking of death, says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it," (Ecclesi. xii. 7.)

immortal souls, and renews them by regenerating grace? Shall we not meekly and patiently submit to his fatherly chastening for our iniquities, and be ashamed of them, grieved for them, and concerned at heart, that we may offend him no more; but may maintain an humble reverence of him, and an affectionate obediential subjection to him, with grateful acknowledgments of his love and favour, even in his chastenings; and so may live in holy communion with him, and devotedness to him here, and for ever with him in glory hereafter; this is infinitely more to our advantage, than any submission to the corrections of our fleshly fathers could be.

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us, after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

10 For truly some of them chastened us, during the little while of our minority, in an arbitrary way, thro' humour, passion, pride, or weakness, without duly aiming at our good by it; and even the wisest of them, who meant well, and acted according to the best of their fallible judgment, might mistake the proper seasons or measures of their reproofs and punishments; and the benefit we reaped by them was only, at most, for the short season of this transitory life: but our heavenly Father, who is a God of unerring wisdom and judgment, and of the tenderest compassion, never exercises his authority in correcting us, while we are in this imperfect state, which is a sort of nonage, but in due proportion, and when he knows it to be best for us; he ever designs, and one way or other promotes, our spiritual and eternal benefit by it, that all the fruit may be to take away sin, and make us more and more conformable to his own holy nature and will in this world, till we be wrought up to a sinless perfection in the world to come. Shall we not therefore *humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time?* (1 Peter v. 6.)

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

11 Now, though it must be acknowledged, and may, perhaps, be objected against the benefit of divine corrections, that no affliction, though but in the castigatory way, is desirable for its own sake, or can be considered as pleasant in itself, or agreeable to flesh and blood and carnal reason, while we are under it; but is in its own nature, as a chastening, very irksome, and sometimes very distressing and hard to be borne, especially when we consider it as a token of God's displeasure for sin: Yet, in the judgment of faith, and in after-reflections, upon it, and by an attending and consequent sanctified use of it, it produces peaceful and comfortable fruits of a spiritual and holy nature, which are evidences of our state of peace with God, through faith

faith

faith in the righteousness of Christ, (*Rom. v. 1.*) bring peace into our own souls, and promote a peaceable temper towards others, (*Is. xxxii. 17.* and *James iii. 18.*); and which make us wiser and better, more humble under a sense of sin, more watchful and prayerful, more circumspect in our walk, more weaned from this world, and more spiritual, holy, and heavenly-minded, than ever we were before. When we are trained up by them, and learn in that instructive school to bear them with faith and patience, with due submission to, and reverence of our heavenly Father, with serious inquiries, wherefore he contends with us, and with an exercise of every other grace, that is suitable to the nature and design of afflicted circumstances, the advantage, which results from them, is vastly an over-balance to the pain and sorrow of undergoing them; and whatever we thought while they pressed sorely upon us, we may, after we have been exercised with them, and come to reflect upon them, say with *David*, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes; and thou, O Lord, in faithfulness hast afflicted me*, (*Ps. cxix. 71, 75.*) And hereafter, when we get to heaven, we shall clearly see, and abundantly reap the rich advantage of them all.

11 Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees:

12 Since therefore these are the gracious ends and benefits of God's chastening you, do not give way to dejection or despondency under them, like persons who, through faintness in running a race\*, (*ver. 1.*) hang down their heads, which are tokens of weariness, drooping, and sadness; and the joints of whose knees shake and smite together through weakness, fear, and dismay; (*Nahum ii. 10.*) And take heed of being disheartened, or of disheartening one another under the sufferings that beset you; but, on the contrary, encourage yourselves, and each other in the Lord your God, to hold on in his ways, like persons that lift up their hands with alacrity, joy, and triumph; and when any are fearful and faint-hearted among you, look well to yourselves and your fellow Christians, that ye be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, as knowing that your God will come with vengeance to your enemies,

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to be an allusion to racers, who appear to be either faint, or vigorous in running, according as their hands hang down, and their knees are feeble, or not: And the exhortation in this and the next verses may be considered as directed to the Hebrews, with a reference either to their

care about themselves, or about their brethren; the last of which seems to be most immediately intended in the passage: he is quoted from *Is. xxxv. 3.* where it lies thus, "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees."

mies, and with recompence of good to you, and will save you, (Is. xxxv. 3, 4.) A belief of this, and a courageous behaviour correspondent to it, will be like strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees.

12 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

12 And, that afflictions may be suitably improved, and not lost upon you, see that, like levellers of the road for travellers and racers, ye, by a close adherence to Christ, and by a conversation becoming the gospel, remove all obstacles out of your own and your brethren's way to eternal life, that both ye yourselves, and they may walk uprightly, and run steadily in the paths of truth and holiness, and may make the word of God your only rule of faith, worship, and obedience, that that it may be a *light to your feet, and a lamp to your path*, (Ps. cxix. 105.) and all your ways may be directed to keep his statutes; lest those of you, who are ready to halt, and to be misled in their Christian-course, through temptation, darkness, and fear of sufferings, and through the cunning craftiness of such as lye in wait to deceive, be perverted and turned aside from Christ and the gospel, and from the paths of righteousness and peace: But let it, on the contrary, be your great concern, that your own souls, and the souls of your fellow-Christians, may be relieved under all spiritual infirmities, discouragements, and fears; and may be restored to a right mind, and to strength and vigour in the good ways of the Lord, and kept stedfast in the profession, faith, hope, and holiness of the gospel.

13 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

13 In order hereunto, Let it be your constant care, and earnest endeavour, to pursue the things which make for peace, in civil and religious society, as far as is consistent with truth and holiness. (Rom. xiv. 19.) Run eagerly after it, even when it seems to flee from you; and do your utmost by all lawful means to obtain it, that, if possible, ye may live peaceably with all men, (Rom. xii. 18.) whether they be *Jews or Gentiles*, Christians or heathens, friends or enemies, and such as persecute you: And, together with peace, be sure to follow after holiness, in daily applications to the throne of grace for it, and in the use of all other means of helping you forwards in it: Whether ye can succeed in your attempts for peace with men or not, study to promote universal purity of heart and life, in conformity to the image and will of God, as in others, so particularly in yourselves; which is absolutely necessary to salvation, and without a conscientious regard to which, together with peace, no man, whatever be his pro-  
fession

fession or pretences, can be fit for, or in the very nature of things capable of, or according to the constitution of the gospel ever be admitted to, the beatification and enjoyment of the blessed and holy God of peace; or to be with the holy Jesus, the Prince of peace, to behold his glory, and to be made completely happy in his immediate blissful presence, where he is seen as he is.

15 Looking diligently, lest any man fall of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled:

15 This is a matter of so great importance, that it behoves every one of you carefully to inspect your own principles, temper, and conduct \*, and to have a watchful eye over one another; lest any of you, or of your brethren, be contented without, and through slothfulness, carnality, and unbelief, rest or come short, or be destitute of an interest in the special favour of God, and of a real work of heart-changing grace, and so be not what he appears to be; and should apostatize from the profession of the gospel. This ye ought to be deeply concerned about, for fear lest any apostate, or principle of apostacy; or any corruption in doctrine or practice, that is offensive to God, and pernicious to yourselves, and will prove bitterness in the end, like gall and wormwood, (*Deut. xxix. 18.*) should sprout forth, and discover itself, like a branch springing up from its root, and should infect and pervert any of you to his own loss and damage, and to the grief and trouble of others; and lest, by means of its malignant influence, many among you should be corrupted in their minds and manners, since *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*, (*1 Cor. v. 6.* and *Gal. v. 9.*) which would mar the beauty, purity, peace, and order of the whole church; and, unless such persons were to be cast out of it, they would be like poisonous herbs growing in a garden, which are not only full of destructive qualities themselves,

#### N O T E

\* The word (*επισκοπεύετε*) here rendered *looking diligently* signifies, and in *1 Pet. v. 2.* is used for discharging the office of a bishop, or overseer of the church, in watching over its principles and manners. Were we to take it in that sense, the exhortation in this place is to be considered, as directed to pastors, that had the rule over them, and watched for their souls, (*chap. xiii. 7, 17.*) But as this epistle is directed to the body of professing Hebrews, who are all along in this context, and through the whole epistle, spoken to; and as no address, as far as I have observed, is made to the officers of the church in any part of it: I therefore rather apprehend, that this passage relates to the brotherly and charitable care which the members

of the church ought to have for one another, and to their mutually inspecting or watching over the spirit, temper, and behaviour, of their fellow-members, as well as over their own hearts and ways, lest any of them should, contrary to their holy profession, be destitute, or come short of the grace of God, as the word (*υστερον*) sometimes signifies, *chap. iv. 1.* and *xi. 37.* and *Rom. iii. 23.* And at others, “to lack, to be in want, or not to have, and come behind,” as in *Mat. xix. 20.* *Mark x. 27.* *Luke xv. 14.* and *xxii. 35.* *John i. 3.* *1 Cor. i. 7.* *2 Cor. xii. 5, 9.* and *xii. 17.* and *Phil. iv. 12.* But it is never used for *falling from*; and so can give no countenance to the notion of *falling from grace*.

themselves, but might taint others that are planted near them: And as one sin naturally runs into another, and wicked men wax worse and worse, ye have need to be very careful to put a stop to the first beginnings of apostasy.

16 Let there be any sinner, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

16 Take heed lest there should be found any one who makes a profession of Christ's name among you, that through the power of unbelief, and of unsubdued lusts, and the allurements of vice, addict himself to whoredom, whether adultery, or simple fornication, which is directly contrary to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, (*ver.* 14.) and which persisted in, and not repented of, would certainly exclude him from an inheritance in the kingdom of God, (*1 Cor.* vi. 9 \*.) or lest any of you should at length so far degenerate, as to become an impious wretch, that makes a jest of, ridicules and despises the sacred doctrines, duties, ordinances and blessings of divine revelation, and renounces them all, through fear of suffering for them, or through an inordinate affection to this world, in like manner as *Esau* made light of, despised and quitted all claim to his birth-right; inasmuch that, for the sake of satisfying his present hunger, he sold and resigned to his brother *Jacob* all the sacred, as well as civil privileges, which were annexed to it; and that for so trifling a price as a little parcel of food, which

#### N O T E.

\* A fornicator may signify any person that is guilty of unlawful embraces, whether in a single or married state. Accordingly this word is often translated *whoremongers*, inclusive of adulterers, *Ephes.* v. 5. *1 Tim.* i. 10. *Rev.* xxi. 8. and xxii. 15. and fornication is sometimes used in a like wide extent. (See the note on *1 Cor.* v. 1.) This is a sin against our neighbour, as well as against ourselves; and so is a transgression of the second table of the law: And profaneness is a sin committed immediately against God and religion; and so is a breach of the first table of the law — but it is matter of dispute among interpreters, whether *Esau* was guilty of fornication or not: some of which consider the reference here made to him, only as an instance of a profane person: And what is said of him, in the close of the verse, seems to favour this thought: as that only relates to his selling his birth-right, which contained, or had annexed to it several valuable privileges, some of a temporal, and others of a spiritual nature. (See the note on *chay.* xii. 20. The temporal privileges were dominion over the younger brethren, and a double portion of the paternal inheritance, as appears from *Gen.* xlix. 3. *Deut.* xxi. 17.

and *1 Chron.* v. 1, 2. Accordingly, when *Isaac* had given the birth-right to *Jacob*, he said to *Esau*, "I have made him thy lord," "and all his brethren I have given to him," "for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him," (*Gen.* xxvii. 37.) And as to spiritual privileges, though there are different opinions about them, and we may not be able to pronounce with certainty what they were; yet it is reasonable to suppose that there were some of this nature; because the first-born carried a typical representation of Christ, who is called "the first-born among many brethren," (*Rom.* viii. 29) and the inheritance of a eternal life is spoken of as the privilege of the first-born in our context, *ver.* 23. And unless some privileges of a spiritual nature pertained to the birth-right, it seems not to be very obvious why *Esau* should be called a profane person, on account of his selling it; nor how this influence would have come up to the apostle's design in cautioning the Hebrews against a contempt of the gospel, and of his spiritual privileges and obligations: For a profane person (*βῆβητος*) is one who treats sacred things with irreligious contempt, and is ranked among the most flagitious and ungodly sinners, (*1 Tim.* i. 2.)

which consisted of a piece of bread and a mess of pottage, (*Gen. xxv. 29,—34.*) and was sufficient for only a meal at one eating. (*Exodus xixc.*) The consequence of which was very tremendous and irretrievable.

17 For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

17 For ye, being conversant with the Holy Scriptures, according to your duty and daily practice, cannot but be familiarly acquainted with the history of *Esau*, as there recorded; and must needs know, that when he afterwards, under dreadful surprize, came to see and reflect upon the folly, loss, and mischief of the bargain he had made, as it affected his *temporal* dignities, (tho' there were no signs of sorrow for his *sin*, and of repentance toward God, or of seeking his favour, and begging that he would grant him repentance unto life) he would fain have regained the inheritance, and the patriarchal blessing annexed to it, which he had so inconsiderately, and indeed wickedly parted with: But as he was disapproved of God; so his petition to his father *Isaac* was utterly rejected: For *Esau* could find no disposition in the heart of his father *Isaac* to revoke the blessing, which he had prophetically, under divine influence, though unwittingly to himself, pronounced upon *Jacob*; nor could he by any means prevail upon his father to change his mind, and reverse his sentence; instead of which he confirmed it, saying, *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed*, (*Gen. xxvii. 23.*) It was now too late for *Esau* to procure any alteration of it, though he solicitously begged it, not of God, but of *Isaac*, with the greatest importunity and concern, and with floods of tears, crying aloud, *with a great and exceeding bitter cry, saying, Bless me, even me also, O my father*, (*Gen. xxvii. 34, 38.*) This ought to be a solemn caution to you, as it will be equally impossible for any professors of Christ's name, that despise the grace of the gospel, and turn apostates, to be ever brought to sincere repentance, and to an inheritance of its privileges and blessings, which they with a wicked mind have renounced, notwithstanding all the proofs they have had of the truth of Christianity, as has been declared, (*chap. vi. 4,—6.* see the note there); and God will never reverse his sentence of condemnation on them, though, when they come to feel its terrible effects at death and judgment, (if not before) they will bitterly lament their deplorable condition, and cry out for relief.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched

18 Take heed that ye do not fall short of the grace of the gospel, and think lightly of its blessings, which are incomparably better than ever were enjoyed under the Old Testament, as has been shown at large, in the

ed, and that  
burned with fire,  
nor unto black-  
ness, and dark-  
ness, and tempest.

main argument of this epistle; and have a care that ye do not revolt from Christianity to *Judaism*: For to begin with an account of the *Jewish* dispensation, Ye, in the gospel-state of worship, are not called and led, as your fathers were, to enter into covenant with God, and approach his sacred presence, according to the awful and tremendous appearances of his majesty on mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, (Gal. iv. 25.) which in opposition to the spiritual nature of the gospel-church, signified by mount *Sion*, (ver. 22. see the note there,) was of an earthly, material substance, capable in itself of being touched, or felt after a corporal manner, though all such touching it, by man or beast, was forbidden, while the tokens of the divine presence were upon it at the delivery of the law, (ver. 20.) and while it was amazingly touched, moved, and shaken by the power of God, (Ex. xix. 20. Ps. lxxviii. 8. and civ. 32.) which might be an emblem of that dispensation, as *carnal, earthly, and moveable*, (ver. xxvii.) Nor are ye come to the fire that burnt (*καταυρώσας τοὺς*) on the mountain, as though it were all over in a flame, out of the midst of which God spake unto *Israel*, (Deut. iv. 11, 12. and v. 22, 23.); which may be considered as an emblem of the *terribleness* of that dispensation, and of the justice of God, who is a *consuming fire to sinners*, according to the strict tenor of that fiery law, (ver. 29. and Deut. xxxiii. 2.) Nor are ye come to the gloomy and horrible darkness that covered mount *Sinai*, by means of the thick cloud of smoke which arose from, and was mingled with, the flashes of fire that burned upon it, (Deut. v. 22.—24.) which may be considered as an emblem of the *darkness* of that dispensation through which the carnal *Israelites* could not look unto, and true believers themselves had but obscure conceptions of, the way of pardon and deliverance from deserved wrath, and of that salvation which was to be brought in by the promised Messiah: Nor are ye come to the dreadfully tempestuous thundering, lightening, and earthquake, that were in the mount at the giving of the law, (Ex. xix. 16, 18. and xx. 18.) which may be considered as an emblem of the *severity of its curse*, and of the terrors of an awakened conscience, under a sense of guilt, and fear of the punishment that is due to the transgressors of it:

19 And the sound  
of a trumpet, and  
the voice of  
words, which  
voice

19 Nor are ye summoned to appear before the divine majesty, amidst those terrible representations of him, as your lawgiver and judge, by an exceeding loud and awful alarm, which made the *Israelites* tremble, and  
which



voice they that heard intreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more :

which, waxing louder and louder for a considerable time, still further awakened their fears, and may be compared to the strong sound of a trumpet, (*Ex. xix. 16,—19.*) like what will be heard at the resurrection of the dead to the judgment of the great day of account \* : (*1 Cor. xv. 52.*) And then followed the promulgation of the law in the audience of the people, by a terrible articulate voice, which distinctly pronounced, in their own language, the words contained in the ten commandments, *Ex. xx. 1,—17* and *Deut. iv. 12.*) which solemn declaration of this holy and righteous law, in all its strictness and extent, made such a terrifying impression on the minds of them that heard it, and filled them with such a sense of guilt and obnoxiousness to divine wrath, that they earnestly begged of *Moses* to interpose, as a mediator between God and them, and communicate his mind and will to them; and deprecated God's speaking those awful words to them, and demanding their obedience, in such an immediate and terrible manner any more, lest they should die. (*Ex. xx. 18, 19. Deut. v. 5, 23, 24, 25. and xviii. 16.*)

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

20 For they were conscious to themselves that, thro' the weakness and depravity of nature, they were utterly incapable of coming up to the sanctity and strictness of these commandments and prohibitions, and of being justified by their own imperfect obedience to them; and they knew not how to bear up under the dreadful appearances of God in the manner of his publishing them: And so severe were his injunctions, as expressly to command, that, if any one, during this solemnity of the divine presence, should break through the bounds which he had set round about the mount, and should touch so much as the border of it, whether it were a man, or even a beast of any kind, he should not live, but should surely be stoned to death, or pierced and slain

#### N O T E.

\* "The sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," appear to have been formed by the ministry of angels: For they are spoken of, as to be sent with the great sound of a trumpet at the end of the world, *Mat. xxiv. 31.* and the law is said to be given "by the disposition of angels, and ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," meaning *Moses*, and to be the "word spoken by angels," (*Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. and Heb. ii. 2.* And yet, as the trumpet, which shall be sounded at the last day, is called "the trumpet of God," (*1 Thess. iv. 16*) so the voice, by which the law was delivered, is represented as "God's

"answering *Moses* by a voice," (*Ex. xix. 19.*) and it follows, (*chap. xx. 1.*) that "God spoke all these words;" and referring herunto, *Moses* said to *Israel*, "The Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of words; and these words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount——with a great voice," (*Deut. iv. 11. and v. 22.*) By comparing these things together, we may suppose that the Lord made an immediate use of the ministry of angels, in a supernatural utterance of both the sound and the words.

slain with an arrow, javelin, or dart, (*Ex. xix. 12, 13.*); which was an awful indication of the great distance that creatures are to be kept at from God, by reason of sin, and of his being inaccessible to sinners, according to the tenor of the law; as also of the vengeance that he will execute upon the transgressors of his commands.

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

21 Yes, so astonishing, shocking, and dreadful was the appearance (*το θαυματοειδες*) of the awful tokens, by which the immediate presence of the divine majesty was evidently manifested to be on the mount, that even Moses \* himself, notwithstanding all his eminent sanctity, and his office of a mediator to declare the mind of God to the people, and his frequent converse with him, was struck with such terror and consternation at it, as he dwelt in mortal flesh, and had still the remainders of a body of sin, that he could not forbear crying out, at the first sight of it, I am all over seized with an affrightening astonishment and dismay, and with horrible trembling. So cloudy and tremendous was the mount *Sinai*-dispensation of the covenant, which concealed its most delightful glories, and engendered a bondage frame of spirit, (*Gal. iv. 24.* and see the note on *chap. viii. 6.*) that it may well take you off from all thought or desire of returning to the *Mosaic law*, the amazing terrors of which ye are not now called unto.

22 But ye are come unto mount Zion,

22 But instead of being summoned to approach unto God under such dreadful representations, as were made

at

#### N O T E.

\* "Moses's saying, I exceedingly fear and quake," is not to be found in the history of God's awful promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai, nor in any other part of the Old Testament: But it was, probably, a well-known and received tradition among the Jews, and, perhaps, recorded in some of their writings then extant. Like the names of Jannes and Jambres, two famous magicians of Egypt, which the apostle speaks of, *1 Tim. iii. 8.* and therefore he might with good propriety mention this to the Hebrews, who were well satisfied in one or other of these ways, about the truth of the fact; and it is highly probable that Moses expressed these words to God, when, as we are told, *Ex. xix. 18, 19.* "Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly; and when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." But as what Moses

spoke, or what God answered him by a voice, is not there recorded, it is most likely to have been then, that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake;" and that God comforted him against his fears by the voice which answered him: For it is added in the next verses, (*20, 21, 22.*) that "the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up; and the Lord said unto Moses, Go down and charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish," &c. Whereupon Moses's fear being allayed, he afterward said to the people, *Fear not*, &c. *chap. xx. 16.*—However, we may depend upon the certainty of what the apostle says about Moses's fear, since he, who wrote under divine inspiration, has asserted it, which he would not have done had it been a falsehood. Traditions thus confirmed by apostolic authority may safely be received by us; though no regard is to be paid to Popish traditions, which have no such warrant, and are generally stuffed with the most fabulous and incredible stories.

Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly-Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

at mount *Sinai*, which was of an earthly and corporeal nature; ye, on the contrary, are called by the gospel to a milder, sweeter, and more encouraging dispensation of light and grace, and of incomparably more excellent, and advantageous privileges and blessings; and are brought, through the faith of Christ, into a happy and holy communion with the New Testament-church which is of a spiritual nature †; and, in opposition to mount *Sinai*, may be called mount *Sion*, as, like the mount which bore that name, it is chosen and beloved of God; the place of his delightful residence and special manifestation of his favour; the seat of divine worship and ordinances in religious assemblies; and the object of all his gracious promises; *the perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth*, as was said of that holy place, (*Pf. xlviii. 2. and 1. 2.*) It may also be stiled *the city*, which is formed into a numerous, beautiful, and orderly society, and endued with glorious privileges and immunities, by the charter, and under the protection and defence, laws and government of God himself, who erected it by his gospel and spirit upon Christ, as its foundation, and is the proprietor of it; and who, in opposition to all the idols of the heathen, is the only living and true God, ~~and~~ dwells in this holy city to animate it with his gracious presence, and take effectual care of it, that all its true members, who are free denizens, may live to him here, and with him in all his glory for ever hereafter. This city of God, considered in opposition to the earthly *Jerusalem*, is of a *heavenly* nature, as its constitution and original, and the birth of all its spiritual inhabitants are from heaven; as it is compacted together in heavenly peace in harmony by the bonds of faith and love; and

#### N O T E.

† What is contained in this and the next verses is not to be considered as a description of the privileges and blessings of the future-state of the church in heaven; but of its present state on earth under the gospel-dispensation, which the apostle opposes to that of the Old Testament: For therein lies the force of his argument to shew the preference of the gospel-state beyond that under the law, and to guard the Hebrews against apostatizing from Christianity to Judaism. But, in allusion to the characters under which the church of Israel was represented, he speaks of the gospel-church, as "mount *Sion*, the "city of the living God, and the heavenly "Jerusalem," which are all terms of much the same import, and are applied in Scripture to the New Testament-church of true believers, of which the church of Israel were

types. Thus it is called "*Sion*, and the "city of God," *Is. ii. 3.* and *Pf. lxxxviii. 3. 5.*; and Gentile-believers are called "fel-  
"low-citizens with the saints." (*Ephes. ii. 19.*) and, in distinction from the earthly *Jerusalem*, the gospel-church is called "*Jerusalem*, which is from above and free, and "the mother of us all," (*Gal. iv. 26.*) And believers being come to it, as described under these titles, may most immediately relate to the communion which they are brought into with the whole church on earth; though the following parts of the description seem more immediately to relate to the communion they have, even while they are here, with the church in heaven, and with God and the Mediator, who are most perfectly enjoyed there.

and as its spirit and temper, and all its tendencies are towards heaven, and shall issue, and be perfected in the heavenly world. And in this state of the gospel-church, ye are admitted to a most noble and exalted communion in love and service, *with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, yea numberless myriads of blessed and holy angels*, who surround the throne of God's glory, and always *behold his face in heaven, and do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word*, (Rev. v. 11. Mat. xviii. 10. and Pl. ciii. 20.); and who are your fellow-servants not to be worshipped by you, but to worship God with you, (Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.); and are all *ministering spirits*, not with terror, like those appearances at mount Sinai; but with love and kindness, to perform the most important offices of friendship; to be your invisible guardians in life, and magnificent convey to Abraham's bosom at death, as they are *sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*, (Luke xvi. 22, and Heb. i. 14.)

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

23 And ye are brought into a spiritual and holy fellowship with the whole body of sincere believers, whether militant on earth, or triumphant in heaven, who constitute the catholic church of true and vital members of Christ, and are a much more delightful and glorious society under Christ their head, than were the general congregation of all the males of *Israel*, at their solemn feasts three times a-year, *Exod. xxiv. 23*, and *Deut. xvi. 16*.) or than the general assembly of their whole church at mount Sinai, when the law was delivered to them; and who, to allude to the birthright which *Esau* sold, (*ver. 16*. see the note there) have many privileges above the rest of mankind, as the church of *Israel* had that were called God's *first-born*, (*Ex. iv. 22*.) and were therein typical of Christ, and of the gospel-church as interested in him, and as the *first-fruits to God and to the Lamb*, (*Rev. xiv. 4*.) who also are *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*, by virtue of their union with him; and are conformed to his image, *who is the first-born among brethren*, (*Rom. viii. 17, 29*.) and has redeemed them to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them unto their God *kings and priests*, (*Rev. v. 9, 10*.) whose names, to allude to the register of the first-born of the males of *Israel*, (*Numb. iii. 40*. are, as it were inrolled in the records of heaven, and in the Lamb's book of life, (*Luke x. 20*. and *Rev. xiii. 8*.) as those whom God has chosen, merely of his grace, before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy, and without blame before him in love, (Ephet.

(Ephes. i. 4.) ; and in this gospel-state, instead of being kept at a distance from the divine presence, as when the law was delivered in all its terrors at mount *Sinai* ; ye have liberty of humble boldness and access with confidence, by the faith of Christ, (*Eph.* iii. 12.) to the righteous and holy God himself, even under the character of the sovereign Lord and Judge of all mankind ; who, being your reconciled God and Father, will, at his appointed day for *judging the world in righteousness*, by *Jesus Christ*, (*Acts* xvii. 31.) vindicate the righteous cause of his saints and suffering servants, and *give them a crown of righteousness, and of glory that fadeth not away*, (*2 Tim.* iv. 8. and *1 Pet.* v. 4.) ; and ye are admitted to the most desirable communion, in faith, love, and joy, worship, and obedience, with the separate *spirits of believers* in heaven, who were righteous before God on earth, as having been justified by the blood, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ ; and whose souls *departed from*, and did not sleep with their bodies ; but, immediately upon the dissolution of their mortal frame, were *present with the Lord*, (*2 Cor.* v. 8 and *Phil.* i. 23.) and there they live in a state of perfect freedom from all sin and sorrow, temptation, trouble or danger, and of perfect holiness, and happiness in the vision, enjoyment and likeness of their God and Saviour. Ye have a partnership with these blessed spirits, as ye are children of the same heavenly Father, united to the same head, gathered together into one body in him, (*Eph.* i. 10.) and animated by the same divine Spirit ; and as ye are intitled to, and shall inherit the same heavenly mansions with them, and join in their hallelujahs for ever.

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel

24 And the foundation, medium, and center of all this glorious communion, into which ye are brought by the gospel, lies in your being called, not to *Moses*, as a typical mediator of the Old Testament ; but to *Jesus*, the only true and effectual Saviour, that ye may come by faith to him, as such, and may have an immediate free access, under a sense of all your guilt, vileness, and unworthiness, to him who is the only acceptable and all-sufficient mediator between God and man, and has irrevocably established and confirmed the covenant of grace, as well as purchased all its blessings, in this new and best administration of it according to what has been set forth at large, (*chap.* viii. 6,—13. and ix. 15,—20.) and ye have communion by faith in all the virtue of his precious blood, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins, (*Mat.* xxvi. 28.) and is applied to your souls by the Holy Spirit, that ye may plead it for

pardon,

pardon, justification, and all salvation, and your *consciences may be purged by it from dead works, to serve the living God*, (Heb. ix. 14.); and which in allusion to *Moses's* sprinkling the blood of the covenant on the people, and on the book of the law, (*chap. ix. 19, 20. and Ex. xxiv. 8*) and in allusion to the sprinklings of the blood of the passover, and of the annual sacrifices on the great day of atonement, (*Ex. xii. 21. 22, and Lev. xvi. 14.*) and to various other sprinklings for legal purification, may be called *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, (1 Pet. i. 2.) which effectually procures, and cries aloud in the intercessory pleas of the Mediator, and in the consciences of believers, when applied, and rested upon by faith, not only for better things than the blood of righteous *Abel*, which was shed by his wicked brother, and cried to heaven, not for mercy and forgiveness \*, but for vengeance to come down upon *Cain* his murderer : and still speaks awful warnings to all others of his persecuting spirit : But the blood of Christ speaks for *absolutely* the best of things, even to his crucifiers, and to all sorts of sinners that believe in him ; and it speaks for *comparatively* better things than even the blood of *the sacrifice* pleaded for, which righteous *Abel* offered by faith with acceptance to God, (*chap. xi. 4. compared with Gen. iv. 4*) under that dark dispensation ; which did not give so evident assurances of such great and glorious blessings, as are now clearly revealed in the gospel, and actually brought in by Christ, and enjoyed with rich advantage by every true believer ; and as neither *Abel's*, nor any other typical sacrifices, that were afterwards appointed under the law, could possibly obtain. (*chap. x. 4.*)

25 See that ye  
refuse

25 Since therefore the gospel-state is so incomparably more excellent, encouraging, and inviting, than that of the

#### N O T E.

\* "Speaks better things than that of *Abel*, or than *Abel* (*εἰς ἀγαθὸν ἔλεος*) seems, as I apprehend, to allude to the blood of the sacrifice which *Abel* offered, and was acceptable for obtaining mercy, through faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. (See the note on *chap. xi. 4.*) I therefore choose to consider it in allusion to this, rather than (as most expositors understand it) to the blood of *Abel* himself, which *Cain* shed : For the argument to show the excellency of the gospel-dispensation, above that at mount Sinai, sinks exceeding low, if it be considered only as speaking better things than the innocent blood of *Abel*, which was unrighteously shed, and cried to heaven for ven-

geance on the head of *Cain*, and brought a curse, instead of a blessing, upon him, *Gen. iv. 10, 11.*; and so spoke for the worst of evils, instead of any good to come upon him, and upon all persecutors unto death like him. But the blood of the sacrifice, which *Abel* offered in faith, and was signally accepted of God, spoke for good things for himself, though not for others, nor with such efficacy, and to so rich advantage and extent, as the blood of Christ speaks for under the gospel-state ; and so was a proper instance to shew that all the sacrifices, afterwards instituted under the law, were not so available as the sacrifice of Christ.

refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven;

the law, take special heed, watch and pray, and cautiously beware, as ever ye value your own salvation, lest, through temptation, worldly-mindedness and unbelief, or through hankerings after the *Mosaic* law, any of you, either refuse to embrace, and give yourselves up unto *Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel*, (ver. 24.); or lest any of you, who have made a profession of his name, afterward renounce him, and so despise and reject, instead of hearing and obeying him, who now speaks to you all the gracious, endearing and important things of the new covenant, by his word and the ministry of it, and by his Spirit in miraculous gifts to confirm it, and in the hearts of those of you that are true believers: For if the people of *Israel* did not escape vengeance, but the carcasses of many of them fell in the wilderness, who refused to hear and yield obedience to *Moses*, and thrust him from them, (*Acts* vii. 39.) notwithstanding all their high professions before of hearkning to him, (*Ex.* xx. 19.) who delivered the sacred oracles from God to them, (*γεννατιζοντα*) and spake after an earthly manner upon the earth; much more impossible is it, that we should escape the dreadful vengeance of eternal fire, if any of us who live under the gospel, which brings glad tidings of a spiritual and eternal salvation, should, thro' unbelief, reject, despise and disobey him, who is the *Lord from heaven*, and personally came from heaven to set up this blessed dispensation; who also, being now ascended up to heaven, still further reveals it in all its spirituality, light and glory, and speaks heavenly things from thence in his apostles, by the immediate inspiration of his Spirit, and by miraculous wonders of mercy and goodness to confirm them, (1 *Pet.* i. 12.) and speaks then with heavenly light and energy in the souls of true believers. It must needs be an inexcusably aggravated and destructive sin, to reject his authority in this most illustrious dispensation of his grace.

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

26 Whose voice, at the delivery of the law on mount *Sinai*, was with such divine majesty, sovereign authority and almighty power, as to cause that earthly mountain to move, shake and tremble greatly, (*Ex.* xix. 18. and *Pf.* lxxviii. 8.) and as to make a terrible commotion by the shocking prodigies which attended it, and among the people all around; an account of which we have already related, (ver. 18,—21. \*) but now, under the

New

N O T E.

\* " His promise of shaking not the earth only, but also heaven," manifestly relates to the great alterations that should be made by the first, and not the second coming of Christ;

New Testament-dispensation, he was to make another more remarkable and important shaking, according to his promise with respect to a better state of things in the gospel-church, (*Hag. ii. 6.*) where he says, *Yet once again, I will shake, not only the earth, as I did at the giving of the law, and setting up that dispensation, which was of an earthly nature; but in a little while, compared with the whole duration of that œconomy, I will also shake down the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews; which was to be fulfilled in the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and which, not merely in a natural, but especially in a figurative sense, may be called shaking both earth and heaven.*

27 And this word, *Yet once more*, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

27 And this manner of expressing it, *Yet once more*, evidently signifies, that there should be but one other eminent and thoroughly shaking dispensation, after the former; and that the *Jewish* state (inclusive of its political and religious constitution) should be dissolved, in which many things, essential to the legal dispensation, were made by the hands of men, such as the tabernacle, temple, and all its utensils, and were appointed of God to be continued only *till the time of reformation*, (*chap. ix. 10.*) to the end that (*ver.*) the glorious privileges and blessings, worship, and ordinances of the New Testament-church, which are of an unalterable constitution, and are introduced instead of the former, might abide without any change to the end of the world.

28 Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot

28 Since therefore we of the gospel-church are made partakers of, and actually receive by faith, the glorious benefits of the New Testament-dispensation, which, under

#### N O T E.

Christ: For in the prophecy, *Hag. ii. 6.* he said he would do it in a *little while*; and the alterations which ensued upon Christ's appearing in the flesh, and not those which will be made at the day of judgment, suited the design of the apostle's argument, which was to shew the superior excellency of the gospel-state, in opposition to the Mosaic dispensation. And the earth might be said at this time to be shaken, as there were great commotions in the earth at the birth of Christ, and by the miracles he wrought, and the earthquake that attended his resurrection. The heavens also were shaken, when the extraordinary star appeared to the wise men of the East, and a multitude of the heavenly host celebrated the praises of his birth; and when the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and God the Father declared, with an audible voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and when the sun

was darkened at his death, and the like.—But the expressions quoted by the apostle, may rather be taken in a metaphorical sense, relating to the dissolution of the church and state of the Jews: For the overthrowing of nations and kingdoms, is in prophetic language represented by "shaking the earth" and "the heavens," as in *Hag. ii. 21, 22. Is. xiii. 13. and Joel iii. 15.* And the "shaking of the earth and heavens," here intended, carries our thoughts back to the mount Sinai-dispensation, and the gospel-church state, which had been set in opposition one to the other in the foregoing verses. (*18.—24.*) and so we are naturally led to understand by it, the "removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, That the things which cannot be shaken may remain; and are called a kingdom which cannot be shaken," *ver. 27, 28.*



cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

under Christ's rule and government, is a kingdom of grace, now set up in the world, and is not liable to be removed, as the Old Testament-dispensation has been, but remains unalterably the same, till it shall issue in the kingdom of glory. Let us, according to the nature, provisions, and encouragements of this gospel-kingdom, which is the free effect of divine favour, and so may be called *grace*, hold it fast in our faith and profession of it \*; and let us be concerned to make a careful conscientious use of all the means it affords us, for every supply, increase and exercise of grace, by which we may be enabled to serve, worship, and glorify God in an acceptable manner, through Jesus Christ, with an humble and holy reverence of his divine majesty, and with a religious fear of him, under a sense of his greatness and glory, and of our own nothingness, sinfulness, and vileness; and of the danger of trifling with him in our approaches to him; and walk before him.

29 For our God  
is a consuming  
fire.

29 For the Lord, who is our covenant-God by visible dispensation, as we are professing Christians, and is effectually so, by special grace, to those of us who are true believers, is no less jealous for his own glory, with respect to his worship according to institution now, than he was when he gave the law at mount Sinai, (Ex. xx. 5.); and as he will still be sanctified by them that come nigh him, (Lev. x. 3.) so his righteous indignation burns against those that are not in Christ, but reject him and the blessings of his kingdom; by unbelief, and cast off his fear; and he in the strictness of justice, and purity of his holiness, is as terribly destructive, like a consuming fire, even to those who are his covenant-people by external profession, but are unmindful of his covenant, under the gospel, as he threatened to be to the carnal Israelites under the law. (Deut. iv. 23, 24. and ix. 3.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How great is our encouragment to faith and patience! We have a cloud of eminent examples in the Old Testament saints, and the brightest of all in our suffering Lord and Saviour, to animate our running the Christian race through all difficulties till it be completed. In order hereunto, Let us cast off every thing that would incumber us, and every sin that we are most incident to, and look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, for all assistance, victory, and triumph, that we may be conformable to him, who, for the joy which was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now exalted to his throne. Our sufferings have not yet been unto death, as they might have been, and were in many

### N O T E.

\* Grace may here be taken either for the free favour of God, or for the effect of it, in gracious qualities. And Dr Whitby ob-

serves from the critics, that the verb rendered to have (*εχειν*), is often put for to retain or hold fast, (*κρατειν*).

many of the ancient worthies, and in our blessed Lord himself; and whatsoever they be, if we are the children of God, they are all wisely ordered and graciously over-ruled by our heavenly Father, in a way of special love, for our amendment in this imperfect world. For what son is there whom the father chastens not for his faults? But O how difficult is it to steer right between despising the chastenings of the Lord, and fainting under them! and with how much greater reverence and submission should we receive the corrections of the Father of our spirits, than can be due from children to their fathers of the flesh! Though such chastenings are in their own nature grievous, they are nevertheless profitable, to make us partakers of his holiness, and to produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness, for living to him here and with him hereafter. How deeply concerned therefore ought we to be, that no afflictions may ever turn us aside from the way of God's testimonies, or make us halt in our holy profession; but that we may advance forward with vigour in the straight paths of truth and duty, and may be exemplary and encouraging to others, under their fears, despondencies, and dangers! And O what amiable companions are peace and holiness! These should be unitedly pursued! But if we cannot obtain peace upon good terms with men, we should remember that holiness is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision and enjoyment of God. And how dreadful is it to fall short of his grace under a profession of the gospel! All principles and practices, that lead to apostacy, will, one way or other, be a root of bitterness, and endanger infection to the church of Christ, whenever they break out. How should we dread the first beginnings of apostacy, lest at length it should run into all uncleanness and profane contempt of every thing that is sacred, like *Esau's* despising and selling his birth-right, which could never be recovered! How terrible is the voice of the law, as delivered at mount *Sinai*, and as roaring in the consciences of awakened sinners! It spreads blackness and darkness through their souls; burns like a tormenting fire within them; overwhelms them like an horrible tempest; summons them, as with the sound of a trumpet, to appear at God's awful bar for judgment; and makes them dread to hear of any thing more of its rigorous terrors, which they know not how to bear. Yea, the holiest of men, like *Moses* himself, must tremble, when they think of God's infinite purity and unyielding justice, as considered only according to the tremendous revelation of them in his righteous law. But how encouraging, comforting, and glorious, are the discoveries and blessings of gospel-grace! Here deliverance from the law and all its terrors, and the richest privileges are set before condemned sinners; and believers in Jesus have free admission to all heavenly blessings with the New Testament-church: For the living God dwells after a more spiritual and excellent manner in them than ever he did in the temple on mount *Sin*, and in the beloved city of *Jerusalem*. They have delightful and beneficial communion by faith and love with innumerable myriads of holy angels; with the spirits of departed saints, which are made perfect in happiness and holiness; and with the universal church of militant and triumphant believers, whose names are written in heaven: And they have humble boldness of access to God, the Judge of the whole world, as they come by faith to him thro' the Mediator of the new covenant, under the sprinklings of his blood, which speaks better things than the blood, even of *Abel's* sacrifice. How should we rejoice and bless God for the gospel-dispensation, which brings us to our only remedy against the terrors of the law, and to a happy communion with God and Christ, angels and saints! This is a constitution of a spiritual and heavenly nature, and is revealed and confirmed immediately from heaven by our blessed Lord, whose voice shook the earth in delivering the law at mount *Sinai*, and who made a most excellent revolution, which may be called his shaking heaven as well as earth, in setting aside the *Mosaic* dispensation, and introducing that of the gospel-state in its stead. How firmly is this glorious dispensation of light and grace established, to continue without any change to the consummation of all things! It consists of such a spiritual church state, with respect to its worship and ordinances, privileges and blessings, as cannot be shaken; and is a kingdom which cannot be moved. O with what spirituality and solemnity should we worship God according to this heavenly establishment! Though he is a reconciled God and Father in Christ to all

sincere believers, he is a devouring fire to all neglecters and abusers of his grace, and particularly to all hypocrites and apostates. How highly therefore doth it concern us to receive, and hold fast, the gospel of the kingdom with faith and love; and to have the truth of grace in our own souls, whereby we may be enabled to serve God acceptably, through Christ, with all devotional reverence of his sacred majesty, and filial fear of offending him!

## C H A P. XIII.

*The apostle exhorts to the various duties of brotherly love, hospitality, Christian sympathy, marriage-chastity, contentedness with such worldly circumstances as providence allots to us, and paying due respect to the instructions, example, and memory of faithful pastors, 1,—8. Cautions against being carried away with Jewish doctrines and ceremonies, which are fulfilled in Christ, the gospel high priest, altar and sacrifice, 9,—14. Adds further exhortations to duties that relate to God, to our neighbour, and them that are set over us in the Lord, 15,—17. Desires the prayers of the Hebrews, and prays for them, 18,—21. Recommends what he had wrote in this epistle to their serious consideration: Gives them hopes of his own and Timothy's coming to see them; and concludes with his usual salutations and benediction, 22,—25.*

## TEXT.

LET<sup>a</sup> brotherly love continue.

## PARAPHRASE.

LET it be your earnest care and endeavour, that as ye have begun, (*chap. vi. 10.*); so ye may go on to maintain and cultivate an abiding and growing exercise of a brotherly and affectionate temper and behaviour, in all offices of friendship one towards another, and towards all your fellow-Christians, who are members of the same family, children of the same heavenly Father, brethren in Christ your elder brother, partakers of the same grace, and heirs together of the same glory, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or whatsoever denomination they are distinguished by.

<sup>a</sup> Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

2 Extend your brotherly compassion, in a special manner, to such honest religious strangers \*, as are persecuted for righteousness sake, and driven from their own habitations and country; or as voluntarily go about to preach the gospel, (*Acts viii. 1. and 2 John, ver. 5,—8.*) Do not despise or neglect these, or withhold your

## N O T E.

\* Though it is indeed common humanity to shew kindness to necessitous strangers, whether they be truly religious or not, and was enjoined by the law to Israel; *Deut. x. 19.* as hospitality in general also is by the apostle, *Rom. xii. 13.* and *Gal. vi. 10.* and the very Heathens practised it in the generous and compassionate entertainment they gave to Paul and the shipwrecked company, who

were entire strangers to them, *Acts xxviii. 2, 7.* Yet as this exhortation stands among those, that relate to the benevolent carriage of Christians one towards another, as such, according to their various circumstances, it is to be considered as one branch of brotherly love, which was to be shewn in entertaining strangers of that character.

your charity from, and harden your hearts against them; but be always ready, according to your abilities and opportunities, to entertain them with liberality and friendship; Receive them into your hearts and houses; and supply them with needful accommodations and assistances of every kind. This will be an honour to God and Christian religion, a seasonable relief to those whom his providence casts in your way; and a noble satisfaction to your own minds in reflection upon it, as it has formerly been to others: For by this generous temper toward strangers, some of our religious ancestors, such as *Abraham* and *Lot*, (*Gen. xviii. 2,—8. and xix. 1,—3.*) had the honour of entertaining angels \*, whom, by their appearance, they then took to be only good men.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them: and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

3 Another branch of duty, which belongs to, and is included in *brotherly love*, and which I would earnestly recommend to you, is, that as ye have had compassion on me in my bonds, (*chap. x. 34.*); so ye would bear upon your hearts, pity and pray for, tenderly sympathize with, and, as far as in you lyes, contribute to the relief and comfort of, and, if opportunity offers, make friendly visits, and give all possible assistance to, those faithful professors and ministers of Christ that are cast into prison, and laid under bonds, for his and the gospel's sake: Do this, like persons embarked in the same glorious cause, for which they suffer, and that compassionate them as feelingly, as if ye yourselves were actually in like distressed circumstances with them. And I beseech you to be as mindful of, and tenderly affected towards all your fellow-Christians, that suffer, if not unto imprisonment, yet, reproaches, the spoiling of their goods, and other hardships on Christ's account, or that labour under grievous afflictions and tribulations of any kind; considering yourselves as members of the same mysti-

cal

## N O T E.

\* If (as is highly probable) the apostle here refers to the entertainment that *Abraham* and *Lot* gave to the angels, which appeared to them in human form; one of those angels, who appeared to *Abraham*, is all along represented in the history under the title of *Jehovah*, who spoke of, and conversed with *Abraham*, (*Gen. xviii. 1. xiii. 17,—22.* and so was not a created angel, but the *Son of God*, the *Angel of the covenant*. (See the note on *Acts vii. 38.*) But as he continued with *Abraham*, and only the other two angels were entertained by *Lot*, it could not have been said with propriety, in the plural number, (as has been supposed would have strengthened the argument) that

some (two) entertained angels, one of which was the *Son of God*; for *Lot* did not entertain him; and if they both had done this, it was no more than hath been said of several, who entertained our blessed Lord, while he was upon earth, under the character of a mere man; or messenger from God at most, while they did not know him to be the *Son of God*, or the true *Messiah*. Instances of which we have in the *Pharisee*, who invited him to eat with him at his house; and in two of his own disciples, who took him for a stranger, and constrained him to eat with them, while "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." *Luke vii. 36. and xxiv. 16,—18. 29,—31.*

cal body with them, (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 25, 26, 27.); and reflecting upon your own state and condition, as liable and exposed to the like trials, while ye, as well as they, dwell in mortal flesh, and have no security but that your own lot may soon be the same with theirs.

4 Marriage is  
honourable in all,  
and the bed unde-  
filed; but whore-  
strangers and ad-  
ulterers. God  
will judge.

4 Let none cast a reproach upon the ordinance of marriage \*, which God hath instituted and blessed, and given laws about, (*Gen. ii. 23, 24.* and *Mat. xix. 5.*); which Christ honoured with his presence, (*John ii. 1,—11.*); and which was appointed by the God of nature and providence, for producing a legitimate offspring, for the harmony of families and the good of society, and for a proper remedy against all uncleanness; And provided this relation be entered into, with the mutual free consent of only one suitable man and woman, and within prescribed bounds for preventing incestuous cohabitation, (*Lev. xviii. 6,—18.*) it is so far from being in itself unworthy, or unlawful, that it is a very honourable state of life, in both sexes of all ranks, degrees, and professions; and is so accounted by all civilized nations: And let those who are in a state of wedlock, preserve the honour of the marriage-bed inviolated, by abstaining from an adulterous use of other men or women, and by a suitable and seasonable performance of the marriage-duty, (*1 Cor. vii. 2,—4.*) which will put an honour upon it. But as to those who are guilty in thought or deed, (*Mat. v. 28.*) either of simple fornication in a single state, or of adultery in a married state, God will often punish them in this world; or, at furthest, will call them to a severe account, and condemn their sins, and the impenitent practisers of them, in the day of judgment, and exclude them from his heavenly kingdom. (*1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.*)

5 Let your  
conversation be  
without covetous-  
ness,

5 Another duty, which I would recommend, as of general use to you all, and of high importance to your Christian character, is, to beware of covetousness in all  
its

#### N O T E.

\* There were, it seems, in those days, some that condemned *matrimony* as an impure and unlawful state, inconsistent with the strict chastity that is necessary to the perfection of religion; while others accounted simple fornication to be no sin; and the apostle foretold, by the spirit of prophecy, that such like pernicious notions would be propagated in the apostasy of after-ages. (See the note on 1 Tim. iv. 1.) In opposition therefore to both these errors, he recommends a married state, as not only lawful, but honourable, provided its ends be pursued with fidelity, and a becoming chastity of mind,

to the preventing of fornication and adultery.—As the verb substantive is wanting in the Greek to complete this sentence, our translators and others supply it by *is*, (*est*) and to make an affirmative proposition; and others supply it by *let it be*, (*sit*) and to make it a perceptive or exhortative proposition, just in the same manner as the next verse, (where is the same omission in the original) is rendered, “Let your conversation be without covetousness.” But as it is uncertain, in which of these ways the verb may be here best supplied, both are taken into the paraphrase.

ness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

its degrees and various ways of working, (*Luke xii. 14.*) which are inconsistent with the forementioned duties of brotherly love, hospitality, and compassion to them that are in adversity, (*ver. 1, 3.*); let there be no immoderate desires, or pursuits after the things of this world, in your temper, traffic, and manner of life; in setting your hearts upon them, and making an idol of them, as if they were your chief good; in being over eager to get them, especially by any fraudulent, unjust, or oppressive means; in grudging any proper expence for the reasonable support and comfort of yourselves and families, according to your respective stations; in being loth to communicate of them, as occasions require, for the glory of God, the relief of the poor and afflicted, and the service of civil and religious interests; and in thinking it too great an hardship to part with them, when, for the sake of your profession of Christ and his gospel, your persecuting enemies would deprive you of them. All these are plain indications of covetousness; and if any man, in this sense, *love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, (*1 John ii. 15.*); but, in opposition hereunto, it is incumbent upon you, as Christians, to be thoroughly reconciled to, and well pleased with your present circumstances, even the meanest and most afflicted of them, without envying the ease and affluence of others; as being fully persuaded, that the things which God deals out to you from day to day, in the way of your duty \*, are better than your desires, and are, upon the whole, what he knows to be most for his own glory, and fittest and best for you: For he, who is the Almighty, the only living and true God, whose

#### N O T E.

\* As the exhortation to Christian contentment with such things as we have, relating to the present life, is by no means to be understood to countenance sloth or idleness in our secular callings, which is every where severely reprov'd and condemn'd in scripture; so the promise of God, "not to leave nor forsake us," is to be considered with regard to any difficulties, or dangers, that may attend us in the discharge of such duties as God calls us to. And though this promise was made personally to Joshua on a particular occasion, (*Jos. i. 5.*) which the apostle seems most immediately to refer to; yet it is equally applicable, as a promise of God's gracious covenant to all true believers, and may be pleaded and relied upon, by every one of them in all trials, as if it had been personally made to himself, (*see Rom. xv. 4. and 2 Cor. i. 20.*) and this very promise, for substance at least, was made, not to Jo-

shua only, but likewise to Abraham, and recited for Jacob's encouragement, (*Gen. xxviii. 15.*) as also to Solomon, (*1 Chron. xxviii. 20.*) and to the church of Israel, (*1 Sam. xli. 22. and Ps. xli. 10, 17.*) Accordingly, our apostle quotes it with an application to every individual believer, as God's saying in the singular number, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:" And the more effectually to silence the objections of unbelief, and the more strongly to assure us, that there shall be no failure in the performance of this promise, there are five negatives, as it lies in the Greek, and may be literally rendered in the stile of peremptory vehemence, "No, I will not leave thee; no, no, I will not forsake thee," (*οὐ μὴ σε ἀρῶ, οὐδ', οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω*). And this evidently carries the force of a contrary strong affirmative of his being with us at all times.

whose kingdom rules over all, and whose faithfulness is unchangeable, like himself, has said, in a way of free and absolute promise to *Josua*, (*chap. i. 5.*) which stands on record for the encouragement of all his people in their various straits and difficulties, and equally belongs to every true believer, in the use of proper means, as if it were directed to him, by name, in all his trials, with respect to temporal, as well as spiritual concerns, Be thou assured that I will not leave thee to thyself, nor in the hands of any of thine enemies, nor in any wants or dangers; nor will I ever utterly forsake or abandon thee, at any time, or upon any account, or in any circumstance whatsoever; no, I will by no means do it; but will certainly be with thee to *strengthen, help, and uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness*, (*Is. xli. 10.*) all the days of thy life, and in death itself. *I will guide thee with my counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory*, (*Pf. lxxiii. 24.*)

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

6 So that we believing and resting upon this comprehensive promise, as applicable to ourselves, may, and ought to say with humble confidence, and sweet composure of spirit, each one for himself; and should openly avow it, with holy boldness in the profession of our faith in God, as the *Psalmist* did amidst all his dangers and distresses, (*Pf. lvi. 4, 11. and cxviii. 6.*) Whatsoever my straits and difficulties, wants and troubles be, the Lord *Jehovah* himself, the everlasting God, who faints not, nor is weary, is my support, succour and defence; and having him on my side to take my part, to revive my soul with grace, and over-rule all events for my good, I will not be afraid of the very worst that the most powerful, subtle, and inveterate of all mine enemies, who are but men of weak and mortal flesh, can do against me; as though he, who is my helper, were not an over-match for them. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* (*Rom. viii. 31.*) And if we be followers of that which is good, *who is he that shall harm us?* (*1 Peter iii. 13.*)

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the

7 As ever ye would practise the duties, and have your faith strengthened in the promises but now mentioned, see that ye pay a due regard to the memory of those deceased faithful ministers \*, who were your spiritual guides,

#### N O T E.

\* "Remember them which have the rule over you," (*ἀπομνηνύσθε τοὺς ἡγούμενους ὑμῶν*) literally translated is, *Remember your guides*, or *leaders*, without restraining it to those that had then the pastoral care of them, who are spoken of, ver. 17. and the remaining part

of this verse, which mentions "their having spoken to them the word of God, and the end of their conversation," seems plainly to interpret it of former pastors, who were then deceased; and at the same time shows that their rule over them, as our trans-

the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,

guides, under Christ their great Lord and Master; and often call to mind the doctrines, commands, and promises, which they delivered to you according to the word of God, that only rule of faith, worship, and obedience. Remember them in such a manner, as to embrace, and adhere to the pure doctrines of faith which they preached to you, and as to imitate their own faith, therein, and their faithfulness in professing and publishing them, together with all the excellent and holy fruits thereof, as they appeared in their lives. And ye ought to be excited to this, by seriously reflecting upon what ye have seen, or heard, and observed of the peaceful and joyous manner with which they finished the course of their good conversation in Christ, and obtained a noble victory over, and happy exit, or outlet (*ἔξοδος*) from, all the troubles and dangers that here attended them; how they then escaped from them all, and went with triumph to glory. This may well animate you to tread in their steps.

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

8 For, though some of your ministers are gone, and others are going off the stage; yet the Redeemer and Head of the church ever lives, Jesus Christ, the object, author, and finisher of your faith, is unchangeably the same in his divine person †, as from everlasting to everlasting God; and is the same in his love to his people in his care of them, and in his offices for them, and promises to them, as their only Saviour through all generations: He ever was the same *heretofore* in the virtue and efficacy of his undertakings and performances to Old Testament-believers, and to all that have since died and got safe to heaven; and he is still the same to all New Testament-believers *now living* upon the earth; and will be the same to all *succeeding ages of them*, until the consummation of all things; and the same to them all for ever afterwards: And therefore ye ought to be steadfast in the faith, as ye have been taught; and to have

#### N O T E S.

station hath it, consisted in their going before them; as their guides or leaders in doctrine, discipline, and exemplary conversation: And indeed the rule of evangelical pastors lies, not in giving laws, broaching doctrines, or exercising any authority of their own; but in explaining, establishing, and defending the laws and doctrines of Christ, and inculcating them on the consciences of his people, by his sole authority, and exemplifying them in their own faith and holy conversation, according to what they have received by their commission, and can prove that they have received them from him, as contained in his word. All pretences to church-authority

beyond this, is really an usurpation, an anti-christian lordship, instead of being entirely subordinate, as it ever ought to be, to the authority of Christ.

† There is a strong emphasis in this word *the same*, (*ὁ αὐτός*) for it is a characteristic of the unchangeable permanency of the great Jehovah of Israel, the *I am*, Ps. cii. 27. and it had been applied to Christ in chap. i. 12. (see the note there) and considering the connection with the foregoing verse, with which the apostle brings it in here, it sets the unchangeableness of Christ in opposition to the uncertain continuance of dying ministers.



have the same trust and dependence upon him, as your faithful guides had, the end of whose conversation was with honour and joy.

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

9 Take heed then, lest, by departing from Christ \*, and from the doctrines and examples of your former guides, as far as they followed him, ye, *like children, be tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, (Ephes. iv. 14.); and, particularly, lest ye be fluctuating, and whirled about, like a ship in a storm, or like clouds by the wind, and be unsettled in your minds by various doctrines about several *Jewish* rites and ceremonies, which are different from, foreign to, and inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel of Christ; but which erroneous teachers insist upon, as necessary still to be observed in order to salvation; (Acts xv. 1.) Beware of being misled by these false notions: For it is every way incomparably better † that the soul, inclusive of all its faculties, be fully persuaded of, and steadfastly fixed in its dependence upon, the free love and favour of God in Christ, as revealed in the gospel for the remission of sin, peace of conscience, and acceptance with God to eternal life; and that it be fortified against all wavering about the truth and importance of this doctrine, by an experience of its efficacy in a work of heart-changing grace, than vainly to imagine that these blessings can be obtained by observances of the ceremonial law, which had a peculiar reference to, and were sanctified by the altar, and *flood in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed upon the Jews until the time of reformation*; but which, as they could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, (chap. ix. 9, 10.) so they of themselves neither were, nor could be, of any spiritual and saving advantage to those who were most conversant with them, even during the legal dispensation; much less can they be so now; but, on the contrary, are very pernicious

to

## N O T E S.

\* This, and the following verses, may be considered as founded upon what had been just before said of "Jesus Christ's being the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And the doctrines, which the apostle more particularly warned the Hebrews against, were such as related to the Jewish meats, that were under the law to be esteemed clean or unclean, and to be eaten or not, according as they were or were not to be, or had or had not been, offered on the

altar; and consequently extended to the sacrifices, and the whole frame of the Mosaic institution, which had a particular reference to the altar, and was sanctified by it. This gives us a proper clue for understanding the meaning of these verses, which otherwise appear to be very obscure in their connection.

† The word here rendered a *good thing* (καλόν) is translated *better*, Mat. xviii. 8, 9 and in that sense I apprehend it is most fit to be taken here.

to those that have continued to keep up a religious regard to them; the altar itself, and all the rites and ceremonies dependent upon it, being now of no further use, since all that was typified thereby is fulfilled in Christ.

10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

10 We, of the New Testament-church, have an incomparably better altar and sacrifice of a spiritual nature in Christ, *who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God*, (chap. ix. 14.); and so was, in his own person, the priest, altar, and sacrifice too, whose divine nature supported, and gave an infinite value to his sacrifice, as the altar sanctified the gift, (*Mat. xxiii. 19.*): and this furnishes out a feast to our faith, in receiving the blessings of his purchase with application to ourselves, which they have no authority, title, or claim to be partakers of, who still abide by, and live in the observation of the external and typical services of the *Jewish* tabernacle, to make atonement for sin; or who, acting the part of *Levitical* priests, perform the offices of it for that purpose. (τῶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν καταβιβασθαι) They have no more right to feast upon this sacrifice of Christ, than even the priests themselves had to eat any part of the sin-offerings, which were to be totally consumed. (*Lev. vi. 30.*)

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

11 For according to the appointment of God in the law, with respect to those beasts, particularly bulls and goats for the sin-offering, (*chap. x. 4, 5, 6.*) the blood of which was carried into the most holy place by the high priest, on the great day of atonement; it was ordered that the bodies of those sacrifices, together with their skin and dung should be burnt, and utterly consumed by fire, in some place, which lay out of the borders of the camp of *Israel*, (*Lev. xvi. 27.*) and so the priests themselves were not allowed to eat of those expiatory sacrifices that were most eminently typical of the great propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which he offered when he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, (*Gal. iii. 13.*) and with the blood of which he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, (*chap. ix. 12.*) This plainly shews, that no legal services can make any one partaker of his sacrifice, which was prefigured by those, from the eating of which, even under the law, both priest and people were entirely excluded.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

12 Therefore, for the most evident and exact accomplishment of the thing signified by those eminently typical sin-offerings, Jesus also, our great High Priest, that he might effectually make atonement for the sins

of his spiritual *Israel* \*, and might consecrate them as a peculiar people to God, by shedding, not the blood of bulls and goats, but his own most precious blood, which he carried into the heavenly sanctuary. This Jesus, I say, suffered his painful and ignominious crucifixion, under the curse of the law, on mount-Calvary, without the gates of *Jerusalem*, (Luke xxiii. 33.) which corresponded to the burning of the bodies of the sin-offering, as things devoted to destruction, without the borders of the camp of *Israel*, while they sojourned in the wilderness; which might also intimate Christ's leaving their temple, city, worship, privileges, and church-state to fall into ruins, and leaving them to perish in their iniquities, who would obstinately adhere to that constitution, and reject him, according to what he denounced when he was going out from thence. (*Mat.* xxiii. 38, 39. and *Luke* xxiii. 27,—31.)

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

13 Let us therefore, who make a profession of his name, and pretend to look for salvation by him, go forth by faith and hope, desire and love, to him, as those that place all our dependence upon him, and have all our expectation from him, and that affectionately embrace him; leaving the *Jewish* camp, and the altar and temple at *Jerusalem*, and all the legal institutions pertaining to them, behind us, as having no expectation from them, nor any further to do with them. Let us also do the like by this world, and all the concerns of it, which answer to the *political* state of the *Jews*, first in their camp, and afterwards in their city, that we may go out from all its allurements and enjoyments in our hearts and affections, and set them upon Christ, who suffered without the gates of *Jerusalem*. Let us cheerfully and boldly own him, under all the scandal of his cross; and be willing to bear the reproach of believing in a crucified Jesus, for all salvation, how much soever it may be a stumbling block to the *Jews*, and foolishness to the *Greeks*, (1 Cor. i. 23.); and let us stand ready to suffer shame, contempt, and scorn for his sake, as those who, in imitation of him, have learned to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him. (*Mat.* xvi. 24.)

14 For here have we

14 For as the city of *Jerusalem* itself †, which succeeded

#### N O T E.

\* Sanctifying the people is to be understood, not of internal sanctification by the Spirit, though that is purchased by the blood of Christ; but it is to be taken here, as it frequently is in this epistle, in a sacrificial sense, for purging them from the guilt of

sin, and consecrating them to God. (See the note on chap. ii. 11.)

† Here seems to be an allusion to the city of *Jerusalem*, which, though it was a city of habitation that *Israel* sought after, while they were journeying in the wilderness, and which

we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

ceeded the camp of *Israel* in the wilderness, as the seat of *Jewish* worship, and of all *political*; as well as *religious* interests, shall soon be utterly destroyed, according to the prediction of our blessed Lord, (*Luke* xix. 41,—44.) ; so we have no durable state of happiness, or of settled residence in this lower world, as if here were our rest : But as *pilgrims and strangers upon earth*, (chap. xi. 13.) and as persons driven from place to place by our persecuting enemies, we, who believe in Jesus, realize by faith, earnestly desire, look and long for, and, by all the ways and means of God's appointment, seek after a future and better city ; a state of everlasting rest, and peace, honour, safety, harmony, and delight, even one of a glorious and heavenly nature, *a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*, who, as our God, has prepared it for us. (*Chap.* xi. 10, 16.)

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

15 In consideration therefore of Christ's having redeemed and consecrated us to God, by his own blood, (see the paraphrase and note on *ver.* 12.) Let us ascribe all possible glory to God through him, as our only High Priest, Sacrifice and Advocate, and as the altar that sanctifies our oblations : Let us abound in daily evangelical offerings of thanksgiving and praise to God, every morning and evening ; and be ready to present them to him at all times, in all circumstances, and for every thing, especially for Christ and all the blessings of his purchase ; offerings, not for expiation, which is made perfectly and alone by his sacrifice ; but spiritual offerings of grateful acknowledgment, which we, as a holy evangelical priesthood, are to *offer up, acceptably* to God by Jesus Christ, (*1 Peter* ii. 5.) ; and which, in distinction from the legal offerings of calves, bullocks, and other beasts, are metaphorically called *the calves of our lips*, (*Hos.* xiv. 2.) ; and, in allusion to the first-fruits under the law, may be stiled *the fruit of our lips*, as they consist of cheerful confessions that all the good we have, or hope for, proceeds from the free favour of God, which is to be acknowledged to the glory of his adorable name, not only by every one singly for himself, but with united hearts and voices, and with social celebrations of his praise.

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget

16 But while your hearts and lips are full of gratitude and praise to God, through Jesus Christ, and on his account, for all his mercies toward you, Take heed of

#### N O T E.

which God led them to by a right way, *Psal.* cvii. 7. yet that city itself was now to be soon destroyed, together with the whole frame of its civil, as well as religious privi-

leges; and so was a fit emblem of the fleeting, uncertain, and transitory state of this world, and of all things in it.

get not : for with  
such sacrifices  
God is well plea-  
sed.

of thinking that this is the only sacrifice of thankful acknowledgment that ye are bound to offer in return for his goodness. Be careful to cultivate a merciful, kind and generous temper ; and to abound in all acts of beneficence toward your fellow creatures, that *as ye have opportunity, ye may do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith*, (Gal. vi. 10.) ; and may give them a partnership, or communion with you (*κοινωνία*) in your temporal good things, by communicating to them as their need requires : For this sort of offerings, as well as praises, are to the glory of God, when presented with faith and love, and in obedience and devotedness to him, and, though not meritorious, yet are agreeable to his gracious nature and will, and well pleasing to him, (Phil. iv. 18.) who accepts both you and them in the Beloved, in like manner as he had a respect to Abel and his offering, which that righteous man presented with faith in the atoning sacrifice of the promised Messiah. (Gen. iv. 4. and Heb. xi. 4. See the note there.)

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account : that they may do it with joy, and not with grief ; for that is unprofitable for you.

17 As ever ye would improve all appointed means of grace and ministerial assistances, for discharging the forementioned duties ; see that ye not only remember to imitate the faith, and the exemplary conversation of your deceased pastors, (*ver. 7.*) but that ye pay a religious regard to the doctrines and precepts of those, who under our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, (*ver. 20.*) are, or hereafter may be your spiritual guides or leaders, (*ἐπισκοποι υμῶν*, see the note on *ver. 7.*) to conduct you in the way of truth and holiness, *not as having dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy*, (2 Cor. i. 24.) And let it be a point of duty with you, to yield yourselves up to Christ's authority, in them, as *overseers which the Holy Ghost has set over you*, (Acts xx. 28.) Attend upon, receive and comply with their instructions, exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs, not with an implicit faith and obedience ; but, as far as it appears, that they speak and act in the name of Christ according to his word : For as it is their proper office, business and duty ; so it is the care and concern of those of them, who understand, and are faithful to their important trust, to watch over you in the Lord, with all diligence according to the ability which he gives them, that they may inspect your principles, temper, and behaviour ; may guard and caution you against all iniquity, error, and spiritual danger ; and may lay themselves out in the best manner they can, to subserve the edification and eternal salvation of your immortal souls : And

they

they engage in this momentous work with a conscience toward God, as accountable servants, that are daily spreading before him, in their addresses to the throne of grace, what they observe of the state of their flocks, and the fruit of their labours among them, whether it be hopeful or discouraging; and are deeply sensible that they must give an account to their Lord and Master in the day of judgment, how far they have been successful, as well as diligent and faithful, in their ministry. These solemn thoughts awaken them to the greatest zeal and care in the discharge of their duty, that they may go on in their work, and report the fruits of it to God, with cheerfulness and delight, and not with mournful hearts, while they are labouring in it; and may give up such a final account of the issues of their holy ministrations, as shall be matter of exceeding joy and triumph to them, (1 *Thess.* ii. 19.) and not of sad disappointment of their hopes concerning you: For, were this to be the case, they tremble to think that, though they themselves are to God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish, (2 *Cor.* ii. 15.) yet all their preaching, watchfulness, and care, would be lost upon you; and instead of your reaping any good fruit from them, would turn to your greater condemnation and misery for ever.

13 Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

18 We who are employed in the sacred office of the ministry, being sensible of the awfulness of our work, of the many difficulties that attend it, and of our own utter insufficiency and need of divine assistance to carry us on in it, and to carry us through it with fidelity, comfort, and advantage; earnestly request your continual importunate prayers for us, that, whatever our success be, we may be found faithful in the day of Christ: For, notwithstanding all our sufferings, and all that our enemies may suggest to the contrary, we trust with humble confidence, that we are upright (though, alas! attended with many infirmities) in our views and labours for the honour of Christ, and the good of souls, (see 2 *Cor.* i. 12.); and our consciences bear us witness, as in the sight of God; that we are heartily desirous and determined, through his strengthenings, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, (*Tit.* ii. 12.) with a due decorum, (κατασκευα) suitable to our moral, religious, and ministerial characters, in all our behaviour toward God and man.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be referred

19 But I more especially beg your united prayers for my direction and support, under all present trials; for deliverance from the dangers I am exposed to; and for the blessing of God upon the services I am now engaged in.

restored to you  
the sooner.

in, that, when he has done his work by me in these parts, he would remove all difficulties out of my way, and give me a proper opportunity of returning, and being further useful to you by my personal ministry, and of being comforted together with you by our mutual faith, (*Rom. i. 12.*) which I am desirous of, and hope will be hastened through your prayers for it.

20. Now the  
God of peace that  
brought again  
from the dead  
our Lord Jesus,  
that great shep-  
herd of the sheep,  
through the blood  
of the everlasting  
covenant,

20. In the mean while, as I desire your prayers for me, (*ver. 18, 19.*) so I am continually mindful of you in my fervent supplications to the God of all grace, whom I address on your behalf, under the encouraging and endearing consideration of him as the God of peace, who is our reconciled God, Father and Friend; and is the Author and Giver of peace of conscience, and peace one with another, and of all manner of prosperity in the dispensations of providence and grace, till it be perfected in an everlasting enjoyment of him: Who, in the scheme of redemption, sustaining the character of the sovereign Lord, Judge and Lawgiver, to demand and receive the satisfaction due to divine justice for our sins, not only raised our Lord and Saviour from the dead, by an exertion of his divine power, (see the note on *Rom. viii. 11.*) but, by an act of supreme authority, legally discharged him in a judicial way, as our public head and representative; and so took him from prison, and from judgment, and raised him again for our justification, (*1st. liii. 8.* and *Rom. iv. 25.*) This he did in token of his entire approbation and acceptance of what Christ had done and suffered in our room and stead, who in his person and office, as a divine Saviour, is by way of eminence, dignity, and propriety, the great and only chief shepherd of the dear chosen flock, which the Father had given him to take effectual care of, in the execution of all his offices, as a Prophet, Priest and King, that he, like a good shepherd, who has a special love to, and interest in his sheep, might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify them to himself, as a peculiar people, (*Titus ii. 14.*) might gather them into his fold; and might feed, guide, govern and preserve them from all dangers; defend them against all their enemies; and bring them safe to glory: All which is brought about by means, and in virtue of his blood", which he shed

to

## N O T E.

\* "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant," most immediately refers to God the Father's "bringing our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead." But some includes its reference to Christ's being the "great

"Shepherd of the sheep; and others, to God's being the "God of peace," according to the current doctrine of the Scriptures concerning him, as reconciled by the blood of Christ; and I do not see why we may not

cutted

to make their peace with God, who, on account of his having done this, raised him from the dead, and gave all power into his hands, that he might give eternal life to them; he having by his precious blood purchased them for himself, and purchased for them all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and confirmed it irrevocably past appeal, (*chap. ix. 15,—17.*) And so, in opposition to the mount *Sinai* dispensation of the covenant, which was of a temporary nature to *wax old, and vanish away*, (*chap. viii. 13.*) this is, strictly and properly speaking, an everlasting covenant in its constitution, and in its benefits, which, together with the covenant itself, shall abide for ever.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever Amen.

21 May this God of peace set to rights all the moral disorder of each of your souls, and of your whole community, and reduce them to all the regularity of hearts united to fear his name †, that ye may be thoroughly prepared, fitted and disposed, and always ready and enabled for every kind of good work, and for every act of that kind, relating to him; yourselves, and others, to perform it in a holy, spiritual, evangelical manner, from principles of faith and love, according to the rule of his word, in obedience to his command, and for his glory; and so may cheerfully, continually, and unreservedly submit to his disposing, and obey his preceptive will in all things, according to the notices he gives of both by his providence, word and Spirit! And as ye are insufficient for this of yourselves, May he, of his good *pleasure, work in you both to will and to do*, every thing, as in his sight and presence, that bears his own image, and is agreeable to his holy nature and will, and that he observes and delights in, as the effect of his own grace, and as acceptable to him through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ! To him who is the great Shepherd of the sheep †, and to the God of peace thro' him, (*ver. 20.*) May all possible adoration, honour and glory

#### N O T E S.

extend its reference to all the preceding parts of the verse.

† The word (*κατασκευάσαι*) here used, and rendered "made you perfect," signifies to set things to rights, and reduce them to their proper state that were out of order, and to prepare them for a use which they were unfit for before. Accordingly it is rendered in other places, to "prepare, frame, fit, re-store, and perfectly join together," as in *chap. x. 5.* and *xi. 3.* "A body hast thou prepared me,—The worlds were framed by the word of God." And the apostle speaks of "vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction," (*Rom. ix. 22.* of "restoring

such as are overtaken in a fault," (*Gal. vi. 1.*) and of being "perfectly joined together in the same mind." (*1 Cor. i. 10.*)

‡ It may be somewhat uncertain, whether this doxology is to be referred to the God of peace, who is most directly addressed in this prayer, or to Jesus Christ, who is the nearest antecedent, and with whom it stands in the closest connection. However, as it is undoubtedly directed elsewhere, sometimes to the Father, and at others to our Lord Jesus Christ, it is due to both; and we may give it such a turn, as makes it applicable to each of these divine persons.



glory, on account of what each of these divine persons are in themselves, have been, are, and will be to us, be ascribed henceforth continually, through all the ages of time, and to an endless eternity ! So it ought to be, and so we and all true believers desire it may be, and are well assured it shall be, in testimony of which we heartily say, *Amen.*

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

22 And now to draw to a close, my dear brethren, whom I love, not only as my kindred according to the flesh, but especially as fellow-Christians, I earnestly beg of you that, laying aside all prejudices, ye would take in good part, and readily receive and comply with the word of exhortation and consolation, including all the instructions and cautions which I have given you in this epistle; and that ye would not think it too long or tedious: For, though it be larger than some others of my writing, I have summed up the doctrines contained in it, relating to the *Mosaic* law, and the person, offices, and gospel of Christ, in as short a compass as I well could, consistent with the vast importance of the things themselves, and your concernment in them, and with my great affection to you; as also in comparison with the much greater enlargement I could have gone into, had it seemed needful for you.

23 Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

23 There is one thing further, which I with great pleasure would acquaint you with, as I know ye would be glad to hear of it; and that is, that our dear brother *Timothy*, who is well reported of among you, (*Acts* xvi. 2.) and as a son with the father, has served with me in the gospel, (*Phil.* ii. 22.) is now released out of prison, and gone upon important affairs to another place\*; and if, according to my present hopes, he should ere long return to me, and I should have my liberty, I purpose, by the will of God, to come along with him, and give myself the satisfaction of seeing and conversing with you, for the furtherance of your faith and joy.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and

24 In the mean while, I desire that those of you, into whose hands this epistle may first come, would present my most affectionate Christian love and respects to

#### N O T E.

\* Timothy it seems had been in prison, probably with the apostle Paul at Rome; but was by this time released from his bonds, and gone to some other place, to which it is likely the apostle had sent him, as he often did to one place or another, as occasions required. But as all our times and ways are in the hands of the Lord, so we have no account that can satisfy us whether Timothy ever returned to the apostle, or either of them

ever went to visit the Hebrews, though at the time of writing this epistle he had hopes of it; and, with a due submission to the will of God, wrote his design according to those hopes. What is here said of Timothy confirms the postscript which was added by later hands, and speaks of this epistle, as "written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy."

and all the saints.  
They of Italy sal-  
ute you.

to all your spiritual guides, who are set over you in the Lord; (*πρωτοκλεις*,) see the note on *ver.* 7.) and to all your fellow-Christians, who by their regular profession are credibly believed to be what, I doubt not, the generality of them are, truly holy persons, as having been set apart by God for himself, and sanctified by his Spirit. Those of this character that are *Italians*, and are at present with me, join their Christian salutations with mine.

23 Grace be  
with you all.  
Amen.

25 To conclude with my common benediction, (see the note on *Rom.* xvi. 22) which, for substance, I write in all my epistles with my own hand, May the free love and favour of God, through Jesus Christ, and all its blessed manifestations, fruits and effects, ever attend all and every one of you, (whatsoever your stations be in the church, or in the world) for your growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and for your direction, preservation, and comfort here, till ye arrive at his heavenly kingdom; with desire and hope of this, I say *Amen*.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a beauty does brotherly love cast upon churches and the Christian character! It tenderly sympathizes with, and is mindful of, compassionate and beneficent to suffering saints, and strangers among them; as being sensible that we ourselves are liable to like afflictions. But how inconsistent is covetousness with this benevolent temper! And how unbecoming the people of God to be dissatisfied with the disposals of providence toward themselves! For he is their helper, and has promised that he will not leave nor forsake them in any state whatsoever.—As Christian religion sets aside no law of nature. What an honourable bond is wedlock for all, whose age and circumstances bring them to it, and fit them for it! But all modern sects, in the single or married life are what God detests, and will, sooner or later, punish upon those that indulge them. But what a complete Saviour is Christ; and how stedfastly should we adhere to him! He always has been, and ever will be unchangeably the same in himself, and to his people; and is their great High Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice too. The atonement he has made by his blood is sufficient of itself to procure their peace and reconciliation with God, and a sacred dedication of them, as a peculiar people to him; and is effectually all that to them which was typified by the sin-offering on the great day of expiation, as he suffered without the gates of *Jerusalem*, and is gone with his own blood into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for them. What a delightful and substantial feast has our faith upon his sacrifice, which they who stick to *Jewish* institutions have no right to eat of! How ready should we be to go out to him from everything that interferes with him; to renounce all the allurements of this world for him; and cheerfully to own and honour him in all the ignominy of his cross! And being convinced of the uncertain, transitory state of all things here, Let us seek a *city* of everlasting rest and safety in the world to come.—Of what momentous consequence is the ministry of Christ's faithful servants! We should be imitators of their faith and holy conversation, who have been our spiritual guides, and finished their course with joy; and while persons of this sacred character are heartily engaged in their work, they diligently watch for the salvation of precious souls; as knowing that they must give an account of their faithful labours, which turn greatly to their own, but most of all to the hearers joy or grief, according to the good or bad effects they have upon them.

Their counsels, exhortations and reproofs, as far as agreeable to the mind and will of Christ in his word, ought to be seriously attended to, free from all prejudices, and with humble obedience and submission to his authority in them, that we may not be misled, and tossed to and fro, by the errors of wicked and designing men, who bring in various doctrines, which are quite foreign to the Christian faith. O happy souls, that are secured against their seductions, and established in the truth as it is in Jesus, by an experience of its power, and of a work of special grace ! But as ever ministers and people would be mutual blessings and comforts, they ought earnestly to pray one for the other. And how encouraging to faith in prayer is the consideration of God in a mediator ! In this view, we may realize him as our reconciled God, and the author of all desirable peace and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal ; may consider our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Shepherd of the sheep to take care of all whom the Father has given, as a peculiar property and charge to him ; and may think of the new and everlasting covenant, as ratified and confirmed by his blood, on account of which God the Father is pacified, and has raised him from the dead, as a public head and representative, for their justification. In humble dependence upon all this, with what holy boldness may we ask for every grace and favour that we stand in need of ! as particularly that God would work all our works in and for us by his Spirit, and would enable us to offer up, with united hearts and lips, continual sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise, and to add the most benevolent distributions to the necessities of others, especially of the household of faith ! These also are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, as sacrifices of grateful acknowledgement that we receive our all from him. And how cordially and affectionately should all the saints salute one another, and their spiritual guides, in a Christian manner ! May the grace of God in Christ be with all his ministers and people ! To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

*The END of the FIFTH VOLUME.*



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solemnly swears that, at the expiration of the following prophecies, time should be no more, and that in the days of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished, 5, —7. A voice calls to John (who observes it) to eat the book, which would be sweet in his mouth, and bitter in his belly, 8, —10. And tells him he must further prophesy of the yet future state of the church and of the world, in a successive order of time, 11. which was to be from about the year 75, (when the Pope of Rome was first invested with temporal dominion) for 1260 years then to come, according to the general description that was to be given of it in the three following chapters. p. 272.

## CHAPTER XI.

The first general description of the state of the church for 1260 years, in the third period, to be dated from the rise of the temporal power of the Pope about the year 756, is represented under the figure of a temple measured, but the outward court of which, as descriptive of formal professors, is left to the Gentiles, or idolatrous church of Rome, for 42 months, 1, 2. During this time, of equal date with 1260 prophetic days, or years, two witnesses, or a few, from age to age, prophesy in sackcloth, but with great power, 3, —6. They are slain by Popish tyranny, which is figured out under the image of the beast, and are, in a manner, suppressed for three prophetic days and a half, equal to the 42 months; after which they arise and ascend to heaven as bearing their testimony with greater efficacy and honour, than ever before, unto the overthrow of a tenth part of the Romish jurisdiction and the slaughter of 7000 men, and to the consummation of the rest of that party, which puts an end to the second wo, 7, —14. And under the seventh trumpet, denouncing the third wo, all antichristian powers would be utterly destroyed, and issue in a glorious state of Christ's kingdom upon earth, 15, —19. p. 277.

## CHAPTER XII.

A second general description of the same period of the church of Christ, and of the Popish empire, under the figures of a woman driven into the wilderness, but preserved in safety there, and of a great red dragon, meaning the devil, as exerting his power principally by the Pope and his party, who would persecute her 1260 prophetic days or years, 1, —6. Michael and his angels fight against the devil and his angels, who are defeated; upon which there are loud acclamations of joy and praise, attended with a denunciation of war to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the devil's or dragon's rage, 7, —12. Hereupon the dragon

gon persecutes the church, which is hid from him, and is nourished for a time, times and half a time, answering to 1260 prophetic days, 13, 14. He covenants to destroy her, as by a flood, which is swallowed up by some civil powers, filled the earth; and, being thus disappointed, he renews his war against the remnant of her seed, 14,—17. p. 288.

CHAP. XIII.

A third general description of the state of the church, during the same period of 1260 years under antichrist's reign, who is represented by the figure of a wild beast rising out of the sea, to whom the dragon gave his power, 1,—10. And another representation is made of the same, by the figure of a beast, which had two horns like a lamb, and spoke as a dragon, exercising all the power of the former beast, 11,—15. And obliging all to worship its image, and receive its mark, as persons devoted to it; with an admonition to consider the time of the rise of the beast, in order to our knowing the time of its fall, 16,—18. p. 297.

CHAP. XIV.

To comfort the church under the melancholy representation, which had been made in the foregoing visions of the 1260 years of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the reign of antichrist, a chorus of the heavenly church is introduced in another vision, as celebrating the praises of God, in the presence of the Lamb, for their happiness, who, as a virgin company, had continued faithful to Christ and his cause under that period, 1,—5. Then follows a vision of three angels; one proclaiming, in a way of prediction, the everlasting gospel, which should be preached at the reformation; another, the downfall of Babylon, the same with the antichristian beast; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God, which should be poured out upon the worshippers of the beast, together with the blessedness of them that die in the Lord, 6,—93. To this is added a vision of Christ himself, with a sharp sickle in his hand, and of an angel crying to him to execute judgment on his enemies as ripe for destruction, under the emblem of a harvest ripe for cutting down, which he accordingly did, 14,—16. And a vision of two angels more; one of which had also a sharp sickle and the other cried to him to proceed to further executions of judgments, without delay, upon the antichristian party, that had filled up the measure of their iniquities,

which was done with dreadful vengeance, under the emblem of a vintage fully ripe and trodden in the wine-press of God's wrath, 17,—20. p. 306, 307.

CHAP. XV.

A vision of seven angels having the seven last plagues, follows, by way of solemn preface to the execution of them, as to be made upon the beast; and a song of praise is sung by the church, which obtained victory over him, 1,—4. Then the temple in heaven is opened, from whence the seven angels come out with the seven plagues; and to them one of the living creatures gives seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that they might be ready to pour them out in their order: Upon which, the temple was filled with an inaccessible cloud of glory, 5—9. p. 315, 316.

CHAP. XVI.

The seven angels are order'd to pour out their seven vials of the wrath of God on the antichristian beast and all its supports, 1. The first vial is poured out on the earth with grievous sores, signifying great troubles through the Romish community, between the year 830 and 989, 2. The second on the sea, which is turned into blood, signifying a great effusion of blood in the holy wars, between the year 1040 and 1190, 3. The third on the rivers and fountains, which became blood, signifying civil wars in the papacy, between the year 1200 and 1371, 4,—7. The fourth on the sun; which scorched men, signifying wars through the contentions of popes for the papal chair; and the destruction of the Eastern Empire, between the year 1378 and 1530, 8, 9. The fifth on the seat of the beast, signifying the establishment of the Protestant reformation, which was a great shock to popery, between the year 1530 and 1650, 10, 11. The sixth on the great river Euphrates, signifying some terrible invasion of the pope's dominion, from its eastern borders, which seems, in order of time, to be yet to come, 12,—16. And the seventh on the air, the seat of Satan's power, which shall issue in the total destruction of all antichristian enemies, 17,—21. p. 320.

CHAP. VII.

One of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, explains the meaning of the former vision of the antichristian beast that was to reign 1260 years, and then to be destroyed, whom he describes under the figure of a great whore sitting on many waters, and on a scarlet beast, attired in purple and scarlet and other deckings, and bearing the

name of mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, 1.—6. Interprets the mystery of the woman, and the beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and of the many waters on which she sat, who is overcome by the Lamb, and brought to consign punishment by means of the ten kings that had supported her, 7.—18. P. 331.

CHAP. XVIII.

Another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical Babylon, 1.—3. And another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God to come out of her, lest partaking of her sins, they partake also of her plagues, 4.—8. Represents the lamentation of kings, merchants and mariners over her, 9.—19. And calls upon the church to rejoice in God's taking righteous vengeance upon her, who had slain the saints; and whose utter and irrecoverable ruin is signified by the emblem of a millstone thrown with violence by a mighty angel into the sea, 20.—24. P. 339, 340.

CHAP. XIX.

The church both in heaven and on earth triumphs, and praise the Lord for his righteous judgments upon the great whore of Babylon, and for the honour of their own espousal to Christ, 1.—8. An angel pronounces them blessed, and refuses the worship which John offered him, 9.—10. Then follows another vision of Christ, as going forth on a white horse at the head of his army, which is also mounted on white horses, to make war against the beast and his armies, which are utterly and miserably destroyed, 11.—21. P. 349.

CHAP. XX.

An angel descends from heaven, who binds and shuts up Satan in the bottomless pit for 1000 years, in the fourth period, during which the church reigns with Christ in a glorious state on earth, 1.—6. Satan is loosed again for a little while to deceive the nations once more, in the fifth period, and, gathering all his forces together, makes his last effort against Christ and his church, which issues in their own final and irretrievable overthrow, and in the eternal torment of the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet, 7.—10. Hereupon the general judgement of the great day is described, in which all the dead are gathered before Christ on his throne, in the sixth period, the books are opened, and they

are judged; and all, that are not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented for ever, 11.—15. P. 358, 359.

CHAP. XXI.

In consequence of the final judgment, the blessed state of the church-triumphant is represented in general, under the figures of a new heaven and new earth, and of the new Jerusalem, in the seventh period, where God dwells, banishes all sorrow from his people, and makes them completely happy, in opposition to the dolorful state of the wicked, 1.—3. And is more particularly described in its heavenly original, lustre and glory, secure defence and bright ornaments, under the figures of precious stones, high walls, 12 gates, guarded by 12 angels, and 12 foundations inscribed with the names of 12 apostles, 4.—14. In its beautiful structure, under the figure of an exceeding large city four square, and consisting of the richest and finest materials, 15.—21. In its consummate felicity, as irradiated with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, exclusive of all the comforts of this world, which are figured out by the light of the sun and moon, 22, 23. And in the free access of vast multitudes, of all nations and degrees through the open gates of this city, the glory of which will swallow up all earthly honours, and the inhabitants of which are perfectly holy, 24.—27. P. 362.

CHAP. XXII.

The description of the heavenly state is carried on under the figures of the water and tree of life, and of the throne of God and the lamb, 1.—5. And, for a conclusion of the whole, the truth and certain accomplishment of all those prophetic visions are confirmed, by way of dialogue between the commanding angel, Christ himself and the apostle John, who was forbidden to worship the angel, and ordered not to seal the prophecies of this book, which were soon to begin to be fulfilled in their order, and are so figured as not to be added to, or diminished upon pain of exclusion from all the blessings promised in them, which shall be conferred on the righteous, and denied to the wicked, when Christ shall come (as he said he quickly would) with a reward to every one, according to his works, 6.—16. To which the spirit and the bride say, Come; and John adds his amen, and closes all with the usual apostolic benediction, 17.—21. P. 380.





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A P R A C T I C A L  
E X P O S I T I O N  
O F T H E

General Epistle of the Apostle JAMES.

In the form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the General Epistle of JAMES.

**T**HIS epistle is commonly supposed to have been wrote by that apostle *James*, who was the son of *Alpheus*, and stiled *James the less*, and the brother of our Lord. (See the notes on *Mat. x. 3.* and *1 Cor. xv. 7.*) And it is called a *general* epistle, probably, because it was wrote, not to any particular person, or church, but to *professing Christians* at large, though not exclusive of the *unbelievers*, of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, wheresoever they were dispers'd through several countries, as appears from *chap. v. 1—6.* and some other places; And therefore the *inscription* is not to Christians under any distinguishing character of them; but only to the *twelve tribes* in general; nor is the *salutation* in the usual strain of *grace and peace*, or the like, but only of *greeting*; nor is any *benediction* added at the close.

The *divine authority* of this epistle is sufficiently established in *Dr Whitby's* preface to it. The *time* of its being wrote is thought to have been about the year of our Lord 60, when the destruction of *Jerusalem* was approaching, in the year 72; and its chief *design* was to remonstrate against the *corruption of manners*, which had spread among that people; many of which seemed to be greatly addicted to pride, contention, and worldly-mindedness, and had perverted the gospel-doctrine of *justification alone by faith in Christ*, which some of them had turned into licentiousness in practice, if not also in principle, directly contrary to its holy nature and design, and utterly inconsistent with a saving interest in its blessings, as also to remind them of the desolation that was coming upon them, and to comfort the faithful among them under all the sufferings which they at present did, or in a little time might, undergo from *Jewish* infidels for the sake of Christ, but which would soon have an end.

The Apostle, after the *inscription* and *salutation*, encourages true believers to bear their trials with cheerfulness and patience; to main-

tain good thoughts of God, and charge themselves with all sinful effects of their temptations; to keep a watch over their turbulent passions; and to receive the word of God with meekness, and put it into practice, *chap. i.* Cautions them against shewing a partial and undue respect to the rich; and treating the poor with contempt and neglect under feigned expressions of pity towards them; takes occasion from thence to illustrate that part of his design, which related to the insignificancy of all professions of faith in Christ for justification, without some proof of its sincerity by fruitfulness in good works, which he confirms by the evidences that *Abraham* and *Rahab* gave of the truth and prevalent power of their faith in acts of holy obedience, *chap. ii.* Proceeds to guard them against reviling, censorious and imperious language; shewing what mischief is done by an unruly tongue, and how inconsistent an indulgence of it is with the Christian temper and profession, and with heavenly wisdom, *chap. iii.* Reproves them for their litigious, proud, worldly and envious spirit, which marred and defeated their prayers, and was contrary to God and his law; and for their disregard to Providence, in pursuing their secular affairs, *chap. iv.* Denounces the judgements of God against those of the unbelieving *Jews*, as soon to come upon them, who heaped up riches to themselves by unrighteous gains. And then, turning again to the Christian converts, he exhorts them to wait with patience for deliverance from the worst of their enemies, who should fall by approaching calamities, and for the better blessings of the world to come, without envying those that were in more affluent circumstances of this life, than themselves; and especially to avoid rash and common swearing; to behave with a suitable Christian Spirit in prosperity and adversity; to acknowledge their faults to, and offer such prayers for, one another, as God will hear and answer; and to do what in them lay, for the conversion of those that had lived in erroneous and sinful courses, contrary to the truth and holiness of the gospel, *chap. v.*

## C H A P. I.

The Apostle prefaces his epistle with a general salutation of the Jews in their dispersion, 1. Addresses himself, first of all, to the Christian converts among them, directing them how to make a due improvement of their troubles, how to apply to God under them, and how to behave in prosperous and adverse circumstances, 2—12. Warns them, not to impute to God any temptations to sin; but to look upon all evil as proceeding from themselves, and all good from God, 13—18. Inserts the duties of watching against a rash and furious temper, and of receiving the word of God with meekness, and living according to it, 19—25. And shews the difference between vain pretences, and real religion, 26, 27.

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**J**AMES a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting;

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

1. **J**AMES, who is, and counts it a high honour to be a ministering servant of the God of *Israel*, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, and the only Mediator between God and man, \* sends this epistle by divine authority, to all and every one of the twelve tribes of *Israel* (Acts xxvi. 7.) especially the professors of Christianity among them, into whose hands it may come, in what nation soever they be dispersed, whether by former captivities, or by later severities; and he heartily wishes them all manner of blessings, relating to this world, and that which is to come.

2. As to those of you, my dear brethren, who are so, not only after the flesh, but in a spiritual relation, and who, for your profession of faith in Christ, suffer many troubles of various kinds, which you do not make to yourselves by your own guilt and folly, but are cast into by the unrighteous violence of wicked men, under the infinitely wise permission and sovereign disposals of the holy God, who graciously orders and over-rules them by his Providence, and sanctifies them by his Spirit, for the trial and improvement of your faith, (ver. 3. and 1. Pet. i. 7) Be not ye discouraged at them; but rather esteem it your honour, and matter of the greatest spiritual rejoicing, that ye are counted worthy to suffer *same*, and other hardships for his name; (Acts v. 31.) and so to bear a noble testimony to him, for his Glory, and the advantage of your own, as well as others souls.

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## N O T E.

\* A Servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ (Θεὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ) no article follows (2) and in the Greek. (See the note on Tit. ii. 13.)

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

3. As being fully persuaded in your own minds, upon the foot of divine revelation, and having an experience in yourselves, that they are designed of God for the trying, proving, and rendering approved, \* the truth and efficacy of your faith in Christ, and constancy in the profession of it, as what will stand the test; and that every such trial of your faith has a powerful influence, through the concurring operation of the spirit, (1 Pet. iv. 14) to produce and improve a calm submission, and persevering resignation to the sovereign will, and holy Providence of God in the most afflictive dispensations, which in a special manner minister occasions, and call for, and inure the soul unto the exercise of patience, without murmuring at his hand in them, or being enraged against the instruments of them.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, and intire, wanting nothing.

4. But, as ever ye would reap this happy fruit of your trials, let patience take its own proper course, without check or disturbance from your sinful passions; and give full scope to its genuine exercises, as consisting of a meek and humble, composed, resigned, and cheerful frame of spirit; and *that* not only in the first onsets of one and another trouble, but with perseverance, under every variety and continuance of them, all your days: to the end that (*ye*) ye may be complete Christians, (see the note on 1 Cor. ii. 6.) and arrive at the greatest eminence in this together with every other grace; and and so may not be deficient in any thing that belongs the Christian state and character, or that is necessary to your holding on, and holding out to the end, and finishing your course with joy, which shall issue in a perfect freedom from all sin and sorrow, and in the complete holiness and happiness of the heavenly state.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

5. In order to the attaining of this, if any of you, amidst all your straits and difficulties, (*lack*) is destitute of spiritual wisdom, (as the best of us all, more or less, certainly are) to direct him in every case, and particularly how to judge of his afflictions, how to behave in a becoming manner under them, and how to make a suitable use and improvement of them, as may be most for the divine glory, and his own soul's advantage; let such an one, under a humbling sense of his own weakness and folly, and of the insufficiency of any creature what-

soever,

#### N O T E.

\* The word (*δοκιμαζον*) here rendered the trying of your faith, signifies *that by which* our faith is tried, and proved unto approbation, as pure and genuine, in allusion to the trying of metals by a fire; and is a different word from that which is used in Rom. v. 4, where the apostle says, tribulation works patience,

and patience *Experience*, (*δοκιμη*) which signifies the *Effect* of the trying; and so that, which tries our faith, works patience in its fruits and effects; and the patience that is tried and proved, works the happiest experience) (see the paraphrase on Rom. v. 4.)

soever to conduct him in a right way, apply with earnest application and prayer, through Jesus Christ, to the God of all light and grace, for the leadings and guidance of his word, providence and spirit, who is ~~readier~~ to give, than we are to ask, needful blessings of him; who bountifully distributes them with a free and open heart and hand to all sorts of men, and particularly to all that sincerely and in a right manner ask them of him; and who is so rich in mercy, and of so great kindness as not to reproach humble supplicants, or twit them with their ignorance, folly and unworthiness, or with the many favours which he has already bestowed upon them, and they have misimproved; nor will he disdain to hear and answer their petitions, how often soever they solicit him for still farther supplies; and he will graciously afford all seasonable counsel and assistance, that are needful for such a praying Christian, (see *Prov. iii. 5. 6.*)

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.

6. But it is not his merely pouring out words, or uttering a prayer before the Lord, that will meet with this gracious answer, no, if he would succeed in his suit, it is to be presented with a firm dependence on Christ, and on the wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness of God in him for a performance of his promises, without any staggering at them through unbelief: (*Rom. iv. 20.*) For he that gives way to distrusts, questionings and sinful jealousies, whether God can, or will perform his gracious promises, is as unsteady and restless in principles and practice, as a wave of the sea, which sometimes swells upwards, and then sinks downwards, and is driven one way and another, backwards and forwards, in a tumultuous manner by a stormy wind.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

7. Let not therefore any man of such a dissident and fluctuating spirit, which dishonours, instead of giving glory to God, flatter himself as though his unstable and unbelieving prayer shall be answered, or that he shall receive the wisdom, or any good thing, which he asks of the Lord, in accomplishment of promises that belong only to true believers.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

8. A man of a double heart, (*Pf. xii. 2.*) that is divided between hope and despondency, or between God and corrupt affections to the world, inclining now one way, and then another, like those that halted between two opinions about God and Baal; (*1 Kings xviii. 21.*) or he, who would fain serve both God and Mammon, (*Matth. vi. 24.*) is unsettled in religion, and continually hesitating, fickle and perplexed in all his thoughts,

words and actions about it; and so brings nothing to pass, nor can expect to speed in his prayers.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

9. But, to return to what has been said about rejoicing in trials, (*ver. 2.*) Any brother in Christ that has a fixed faith in him, and in the power and grace of God through him, may warrantably plead and safely rely on every promise of his covenant. Upon this consideration, let him that is poor in outward circumstances, and oppressed by persecutions, and is of a lowly spirit, suitable to such an afflicted condition, glory (*αυχροῦ*) in the thought, that he is highly advanced to all the spiritual riches of faith, as an heir of the kingdom of Heaven, (*chap. ii. 5.*) and to the honour of those believers, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to suffer for his sake, and upon whom the spirit of glory and of God resteth. (*Phil. i. 29, and 1. Pet. iv. 14.*)

10 But the rich in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

10. And, on the other hand, as to any Christian-brother, who, amidst all his affluence, is brought to have low thoughts of himself, and of all his earthly enjoyments, as mean, precarious and perishing, and to be willing to give them all up for Christ; or who, having had abundance of the possessions of this life, is now reduced to poverty for the sake of his holy profession, and is of an humble spirit, let him rejoice in the happy exchange of temporal wealth and prosperity for the incomparably better and everlasting riches of grace and glory: because, supposing that he were not to be deprived of his worldly enjoyments while he lives, he must soon die away from them; and then all his flourishing state in them will perish with him, like the fading flower of the field. (*Isa. xl. 6. 7.*)

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

11. For as the sun in the firmament no sooner rises in the full strength of its scorching heat, like that which beat upoo the head of *Jonah*, and was attended with a vehement East wind, (*Jon. iv. 8.*) but it immediately causes the flourishing grass, or verdant stem to wither; and its beautiful flower sickens, droops, and dies; and all the glory of its lively, gay, and florid appearance is destroyed: So the man of wealth and grandeur, that has no better portion than the splendid and pleasing enjoyments of this present life, shall pine away in his iniquity, and be cut off, by one or another Providence, in the midst of all his schemes and designs for this world, and of all his prosperity and honour.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he

12. Happy, inexpressibly happy, is the man who is called, and has wisdom and grace to enable him, in a Christian manner, to bear the greatest tribulation, even to the loss of all things here for Christ; For when

shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

he has passed through the trial, and is (*παρισυς*) approved of God, as having endured it with Faith and patience, humble submission and holy fortitude, and stood the proof, he shall come off a conqueror; and, in opposition to the garland of fading herbs and flowers, which victors were crowned with in the *Grecian* games, shall receive the immortal and incorruptible crown of all heavenly life, blessedness and glory; which the Lord Jesus, the great Judge of all, and God the Father on his account, has freely promised, and will certainly give at the last day, to all those, who, from a principle of faith in Christ, supremely desire, esteem, and delight in him, and look and long for his appearing in all his glory to their complete salvation, (*Heb. ix. 28.*) They therefore may well rejoice in all Tribulations for his sake.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

13. If then any professor of his name, instead of improving in grace and holiness, should fall into impatient murmurings, distrust of God, and apostacy, or any other sin, by means of the afflictions that beset him, and are suited, designed, and blessed, for the good of such as make a proper use of them, let him not dare to think, or say, that when he is thus tried, and it becomes an occasion of sin to him, God, whose providence ordered those trials, drew him into sin by them. It is shocking impiety to bring any such charge against him: For God is so infinitely pure and holy in his nature and will, designs and operations, that it is absolutely impossible for him to be prevailed upon by any occurrence from without, or any motion within himself, to do the least iniquity; nor can he, consistent with his own absolute perfection, entice or persuade, much less inwardly influence, and much less still ever necessitate, any one to commit the least moral evil,\* which he utterly abhors. (*Habak. i. 13.*)

14 But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

14. But the true and proper cause of, any man's being induced by outward afflictions to revolt from God, or sin against him, lies not in those dispensations of providence, but in himself. Whenever they have such a malignant effect upon him, it is owing to his own corrupt heart and wicked inclinations, which

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## N O T E.

\* The evil here spoken of is undoubtedly moral evil, or the evil of sin, as it is determinately explained in the two next verses. But the evil of affliction or punishment is quite a different thing, with respect to which God says, *I make peace and create evil*; and shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it? *Isa. xlv. 7.* *Amos. iii. 6.*) and yet

as he inflicts even this sort of evil, only on account of sin, which has deserved it; we in the moral view may be said to be the cause of it, rather than God who *delights in mercy*, and counts judgements *his strange work*; and said of *Israel*, that they had fallen by their iniquity, and destroyed themselves.

violently drag him off (*ἔξαγομεν*) from the way of truth and holiness, and from a profession of Christ's name, and which (*δαιδαλόμενος*) beguile and delude him into sin and apostacy, under some specious deceitful appearances of carnal ease and pleasure, or worldly advantage that he purposes to himself by it, as a fish is caught and drawn out of the water by the hook, that is covered with a tempting bait.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

15. It is then, and then only, when the evil propension in the thoughts of a man's own heart, which is itself sin in *embrio*, (*Prov. xxiv. 9.*) has gained the approbation and free consent of the will, that it produces *actual* sin, as the genuine fruit of its own depraved inclination; and actual sin, when it is completed, allowed of, persisted in, and indulged with impenitence and unbelief, not only renders him obnoxious to, but will certainly issue in everlasting misery, as its proper fruit and wages, (*Rom. v. 21. 23.* See the note there) which is the second death; and so his destruction is, and will be of himself. A

16 Do not err my beloved brethren.

16. Take heed then, my dear brethren, (*μεταλασθε*) lest any of you run astray from the truth of the gospel, and wander into such abominably erroneous, blasphemous and injurious conceptions of the holy and blessed God, or of his ways, as to imagine that he is or can be the author of sin, or doth any thing to encourage or promote it.

17 Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

17. On the contrary, he is so infinitely far from this, that every good thing we enjoy, relating to this world and that which is to come; every bounty of providence, and intellectual endowment, and every gift of a spiritual and holy kind, which has no mixture of sin in it, but tends to the perfecting of our nature and happiness; all, and nothing but, good in the natural, moral and spiritual world, is originally and effectually from God, whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom rules over all; (*Pf. ciii. 19.*) and it descends from on high, and is communicated to us from him, who is himself light, without any darkness at all; (*1 John i. 5.*) and is the fountain, author and giver of all sorts of light, rational and religious, as well as corporal, of all the light of knowledge, holiness and happiness, grace and glory; and who is unchangeably the same in himself and in his will and purposes, (*Mal. iii. 6.*) without the least alteration,\* or any mixture of shade, by turning from

#### NOTE.

\* With whom is no variableness; *ἡ ἀμεταβολία* seems to allude to the *parallelas* or changes of the sun, which appear different in the East,



from moral good to evil, in his own nature, or in any of his thoughts or dispensations: we may therefore be sure that no unrighteous evil, but all good comes from him.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

18. We, who believe, have a most eminent and in-dearing demonstration, that the best of all blessings derive from him, as it is not from any wisdom, or power, worthiness or merit in us, but merely of his own good will, and sovereign pleasure, *according to his abundant mercy*, that he has regenerated and begotten us to a lively hope of an everlasting inheritance, (*John i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 3. 4.*) by means of the gospel, which is his true and faithful word, and is rendered efficacious, in the hand of the Spirit, for producing the new birth, and all the holiness and happiness that ensue upon it. (See *John xvii. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 15. and 1 Pet. i. 23.*) And he has done this for us, that we, like the first fruits under the law, might be consecrated to him as his peculiar property, and the most excellent kind of all his creatures; and as the pledge and earnest of his gathering in a harvest of souls to himself, from amongst *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, by a new creation of them in *Christ Jesus unto good works*, (*Eph. ii. 10.*) in which he first began with us, the converted *Jews*.

19 Wherefore my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

19. Therefore, my dear Christian brethren, let every one of you, suitable to his character and obligations, as a new creature, be ready to hear, and attend to what God says in his word, about himself, and about the great and good things, that he has done, and promised to do for his people: let not such an one dare to speak reproachfully of God, or of his ways of providence and grace; nor be rash and hasty in setting up for a preacher, or in giving his sense of difficult texts of Scripture before he has well considered them: and, as ever he would not speak unadvisedly with his lips, let him keep

a

#### N O T E.

*Eph.* in its meridian height, and in the *West*. And *neither shadow of turning* (*ἡ σκία τῆς ἀποστρέψεως*) seems to allude to departures of the sun from us between the *tropicks*, that cast different shades. But there is no variation in the nature or will of God, who is always the same, and whose dispensations, how various soever, are all *according to the counsel of his own will*. (*Eph. i. 11.*) and there is no inconsistency in this with those passages, that speak of his *repenting* of any good, or evil, which he by his word, or providence, or both, seemed to have intended to perform: for they relate, not to

any alteration in the mind or decree of God himself, but only in his external methods of procedure, when they are such as men use to make upon any change in their own purposes: but as God infallibly foreknew all events from eternity, he always invariably determined to alter his various dispensations, as he knew the circumstances of things would make it fit for him so to do. To suppose the contrary would argue a most unsufferable self-subversive imperfection in the Almighty, infinitely wise and blessed God, and in the certainty and steadiness of his views and designs, as the great governor of the world.

a curb upon his passions, and take heed of an angry wrathful temper in disputing for or against points of controversy; or in treating any person with haughty contempt and severity, that differs from him.\*

20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

20. For the unguarded heart and intemperate fury of a man's own passions, which, whatever be pretended, proceed from pride, selfishness and impatience of contradiction, and not from a regular and sacred zeal, are far from serving God's righteous cause, which needs no such unhallowed methods to support it, and are far from recommending to others his way of righteousness by Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel; (*Rom. i. 17.*) or the practice of righteousness, which God enjoins and approves: (*1 Cor. xv. 34.* and *Psal. xi. 7.*) They, on the contrary, cloud and hurry a man's own thoughts, and render him incapable of speaking aright for God; and at the same time prejudice the minds of others against all that he offers to bring them over unto righteousness.

21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

21. Labour therefore to cast away, with abhorrence, all those corrupt affections, which defile the soul, saying to them, *Get ye hence*, (*Isa. xxx. 22.*) and all the overflowings of malice, (*πικρῶταυ κακίας*) which are excessively evil, and are like the luxuriant branches of a tree, which suck away the sap that should make it fruitful; and having abandoned these, let it be your great concern, that, with all humility, modesty, and submission of your understandings and hearts, consciences and affections to the authority of God in his word, ye may cordially embrace it with faith and love, and it may be set, like a good and fruitful graft, into your very souls, as vitally united with them, and turning all their dispositions and productions into its own holy likeness, which is completely sufficient to shew you the way of salvation; and when received into the heart by faith, and attended with the power of the spirit, is wonderfully efficacious to nourish your immortal souls with saving virtue, and bring them into a possession of all heavenly happiness, which consists in a deliverance from sin and misery, and in an enjoyment of, and conformity to, the blessed God in all his glory for ever.

22. But

#### N O T E.

\* The three directions contained in this verse may very well be considered as general rules of conduct in the ordinary course of our lives and conversation, that we should be more swift to hear than to speak, and should keep a guard upon our passions. But as this verse is an inference from the foregoing discourse; and as the good and bad use of

the tongue, and regulation of the passions, are handled distinctly and at large in *chap. iii.* I rather think that the apostle intended all these exhortations in some such peculiar reference to what he had just before been speaking of, as is suggested in the paraphrase, (*Vid. Zanch. in loc.*)

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

22. But that it may have this happy effect upon you, see that its influence be so powerful in your hearts, as to engage you to put its excellent and holy principles into practice in your lives; and that ye content not yourselves with barely giving it the hearing, and assenting to it, to fill your heads with notions of the gospel, as if this were all that is necessary to salvation; which would be to delude your own souls by fallacious reasonings, (*παλαγοιζομενοι εαυτους*) and putting the worst of all cheats upon yourselves, in matters of the highest and everlasting consequence.

23. For let people's pretences be what they will, if any one be only a hearer of the word of God, and don't receive it with faith and love, so as to regulate his dealings with God, and conversation in the world, according to it, he is ~~not~~ *not* a man, (*ουδεις*) who, being ordinarily less curious than women about cleanliness and dress, cursorily looks at the image of his own human face in a mirror or looking-glass; and when he goes away thinks no more of it, nor takes any care to wipe off the spots of dirt upon it. Just so it is with the careless and unprofitable hearer: when he comes to attend on the preaching of the word of God, which may fitly be compared to a looking-glass, as it plainly discovers what a man is in himself, according to the law, and what he may hope to be in Christ according to the gospel, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) he has some notions and convictions of his own guilt, depravity and danger, and of his need of a Saviour, and of a thorough change in heart and life; but proceeds no further;

24 For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

24. For, having taken only a slight and transient view of himself, without any deep and abiding impressions upon his heart, he goes away, like the man who beheld his natural face in a glass; and through the cares, or riches, or pleasures of this life, (*Luke viii. 14.*) immediately lays aside all thoughts or concern about what he saw of his own sin and misery, and want of pardoning and renewing grace, while he sat under the word; and so goes on in impenitence and unbelief, and in a sinful course of life, just as before.

25 But who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein,

25. But (*ο δε παρακυρας*) he who, in opposition to a slight and transient view, (*ver. 23. 24.*) accurately and intently looks into the glass of the gospel-revelation, \* which is a complete doctrine of spiritual liberty to

true

#### N D T E.

\* By the perfect law of liberty seems to be meant the doctrine of the gospel, which was spoken of in the preceding context, and in a lax sense of the word is here styled a law, as in Rom. iii. 27. (See the note there.) for the Mosaic law.

in every view of it, is always represented in the New Testament, as a law of servitude, in opposition to the gospel, and never as a law of liberty. (Vid. *Par. in loc.*)

he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

true believers for their deliverance from the ceremonial yoke of bondage, and the servile spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, and from the guilt and power of sin, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, and eternal misery, and for their serving him with holy freedom and delight; and he who continues in the faith and practice of the things contained therein, and so is not careless and unmindful of what he heard, or of what he saw himself to be in that glass, but lives in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty answerable to it; this man is happy indeed, though not for, yet in his work of faith and labour of love, and in the very keeping of God's commands; (*Pf. xix. 11.*) and as his fruit is unto holiness, the end shall be everlasting life. (*Rom. ~~viii.~~ viii.*)

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlcth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

26. Upon the whole then, if any one among you pretends to be a worshipper of God, (*θεωτὸς τιτῶν*) or makes a great show of religion, and talks abundantly of it, that he may pass for a pious man; and yet, at the same time, do not restrain and govern his tongue, as a furious headstrong horse is checked and curbed by the bridle; but gives himself leave to use profane and abusive language, or to rail against, revile, censure and reproach his brother, flattering himself with a vain conceit, as though a zeal for God would justify all the injurious and bitter words, which in reality proceed from the pride and passion of his own deceived heart; all this man's religion, whatever he or others may think of it, is an empty insignificant thing, (*ver. 20.*) which will never do him any good, as one that is blessed in his deed. (*ver. 25.*)

27 Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

27. In opposition to all these false and hypocritical appearances, the religion of the gospel, that is truly sincere and uncorrupted, without mixture of human inventions, or of carnal principles, motives and ends to defile it, and is exercised, as in the sight and presence of God, even the Father, according to his will and word, with a desire of pleasing him rather than men; the religion that is approved and accepted of God in Christ, is this, it disposes and engages the Christian to be tender, kind and compassionate to the needy and distressed, especially of the household of faith, (*Gal. vi. 10*) in doing what he can for their relief and comfort, with all the condescension and friendship that are manifested in readily visiting and assisting poor fatherless children, and destitute widows, who, of all others, need a helping hand; and by its powerful influence upon him, he is enabled to behave in such a circumspect and holy manner,

ner, as to keep clear of the pollutions of this evil and ensnaring world, that he may not defile himself, or bring a slur upon his conscience, hopes, or character, *by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.* (1 John ii. 16.)

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Blessed be God! who takes care of his scatter'd ones, wheresoever they are. Though their tribulations for his name's sake may be great, yet they may rejoice in them, as over-ruled and sanctified for he trial and improvement of their faith and patience, and the perfecting of his good work in them, who shall receive the crown of life, which he has promised to those that love him. What is all this world, which fades and perishes like the flower of the field by the scorching heat of the sun, compared with the exalted and immortal blessings that belong to the humble Christian of the lowest degree? But, O what spiritual wisdom do the children of God need to enable them to behave, as becomes them under their various trials! And what solid grounds have they to ask it in faith! the Father of Lights will give it to them; and not upbraid, but liberally supply persons of all characters and conditions with such good things as they pray for in faith; while others defeat their own prayers, by distrusting his power, faithfulness and grace, and by fluctuating in religion like a wave of the sea. But if any are drawn into sin and apostacy, by means of the temptations they meet with, how monstrously impious and shocking is it to father their sin upon God, as though he were the cause of it! All good and no moral evil comes from him, who dwells on high: and who, in the mere sovereign pleasure of his own gracious will, forms his people for himself by his regenerating spirit, and the instrumentality of his word, that they may be an excellent kind of creatures to shew forth his praise; and such is the absolute unchangeableness of his holy nature and will, that he can neither be induced to do any iniquity himself, nor to abet or encourage it in others. But whosoever commits sin, it is all owing to the corrupt inclinations of his own heart, which, having once gained the free consent of the will, produces actual sin; and this, persisted in, brings forth its proper wages, in death and ruin; and so he destroys himself.—How watchful should we be against pride and passion, hard thoughts of God, and an assuming temper, that is more ready to speak, than to hear! And with what humility, reverence and submission to the authority of God in his word, should we receive it, that, by the concurrence of his spirit, it may become an engrafted word to the saving of our souls; and that we may not only be hearers, but hearty believers and conscientious observers and doers of all that it says to us! without practical godliness, all a man's thoughts about his own state and condition that have at any time been presented to his view in the glass of God's word, are soon forgotten, and leave him just where they found him, impenitent, unbelieving and unreformed. But he who has a clear and transforming insight, by divine illumination, into the gospel, which is a perfect system of the noblest liberty to true believers, is such a hearer of the word, as is blessed in his way and work, and shall be so at the end of them. O how seriously concerned should we be, not to deceive our own souls in an affair of such vast and eternal consequence! If we are under the dominion of a severely censorious and unruly spirit and tongue, whatever our pretences to religion be, we may depend upon it, that they are all hypocritical, empty and vain. But if we have that faith, which works by love and compassion to the poor, the destitute widow and fatherless, and which purifies the heart, and fortifies us against the temptations of the world, this is sincere and uncorrupted religion in God's account, and he will own it.

## C H A P. II.

*The Apostle goes on to shew that all notions and professions of faith are vain, if not productive of impartial love and justice to others, the poor as well as the rich, 1---13. And strongly argues from the nature of things, (illustrated by fruitless pretences of pity to the poor, and by a body without a soul) and from the instances of Abraham and Rahab, the necessity of good works to prove the sincerity of faith, which otherwise is dead, and will be of no more advantage than the faith of devils, 14---26.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**M**Y brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

**1. T**HAT your religion, my professing Christian brethren, may prove to be of that kind, which is pure and undefiled, (*chap. i. 27.*) take heed of entertaining mere notions of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in himself a gloriously divine person, and the purchaser and giver of heavenly glory; and is to be embraced as glorified, after his sufferings and death, by a lively faith in him; and beware of taking up with such empty professions of his glorious name, and presumptuous dependencies on him for eternal life, as leave you under the power of a partial, unjust, and carnal acceptance of persons, (*προσωποληψίας*)\* not according to their religious characters, and the merits of their cause, but according to their higher or lower circumstances in this life.

**2** For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly ap-

**2.** For if, at any time, there come into your synagogue, or place of assembling, as for religious worship, so for judging and determining ecclesiastical and civil causes, (see the note on *ver. 1.*) one man that makes a figure,

## N O T E.

\* *With respect of persons* it is not to be understood as designed to discountenance paying civil respect in a decent manner to persons of superior rank and station, which would be to contradict the apostle Paul's order (*Rom. xiii. 7.*) to render honour to whom honour is due, by virtue of their civil character: But it rather relates to partial respects being shewn in civil and ecclesiastical proceedings, merely on account of one person's being richer and finer dressed than another: for in the next verse the apostle speaks of one and the other's coming into the assembly or synagogue, (*ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*) which was used for civil and ecclesiastical judicature as well

as for religious worship: and then he goes on (*ver. 3-9.*) to speak of sitting at the footstool, in allusion to the custom of placing persons of lower rank there in their judicatories; and speaks of judges and judgement-seats and of persons acting partially, as transgressors of the law, which seems to refer to the law about impartial judgement, without respect to the rich or poor, *Lev. xix. 15.* and *Deut. i. 17.* (see Dr. Hammond's and Whitby's note here,) and so this is no way inconsistent with that becoming deference to persons of superior rank and character, which our blessed Lord recommends in common conversation and behaviour, *Luke. xiv. 8-10.*

parel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay cloathing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there or sit here under my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment-seats:

figure, and is decked with rich and splendid ornaments, such as a gold ring on his finger, and sumptuous raiment; and another comes into the same assembly or court, that is in mean circumstances, and makes a despicable appearance in a coarse or ragged dress;

3. And if, in this case, ye shew abundance of respect and deference to him that glitters in fine and gaudy cloaths; and, for that reason only, take great care to ingratiate yourselves with him, and to decide every thing in his favour, and in token thereof invite him to the most honourable seat, saying, Pray, sir, please to take your place here; and at the same time treat the man of low circumstances with scorn, and with a contempt of him and his cause, saying, Stand you at a distance; or, if you would sit, it must be at no better place than my footstool:

4. Is not this scandalous difference, which ye make between the rich and the poor, a plain evidence of an unjustifiable partiality in your temper and conduct towards one rather than the other? And do you not in reality, pass such a judgement about them severally, as proceeds from carnal, wrong, and biased ways of thinking concerning them, only according to outward appearance?

5. To guard you against, and cure you of this evil, pray, my dear brethren, whom I trust God loves, consider how contrary this opinion and proceeding of yours is to his thoughts and ways in things that relate to religion and salvation; has not the great and blessed God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, from all eternity chosen (*Eph. i. 4.*) mostly persons of lower circumstances among mankind to faith and holiness here, and to compleat salvation hereafter? (*2 Thess. ii. 13.*) And has he not shewn, in the dispensations of his sovereign mercy, that he has peculiarly made choice of such to be partakers of much more excellent riches, through faith in his Son, and through lively exercises of it, than can be found in this world; and to be entitled to, and brought to the possession of an inheritance of all the blessings of that kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter, which he has made over, in the promises of the new covenant, to those that desire, esteem, and delight in him above all creature-enjoyments?

6. But while ye, on the contrary, have treated your poor Christian brethren with neglect and disregard, ye have dishonoured and poured contempt upon those whom God loves, and has put the highest honour upon, and paid your chief respects to such as he despises, and as ye

ye have no cause to care. For what sort of treatment do ye meet with from them? Is it not the custom of the great and rich men of this world to deal very injuriously by you? Do not the generality of them, through pride and insolence, and enmity to Christ and his ways, set themselves against you, and (καταδυσκονουν υμιν) exercise a cruel tyranny over you for his sake; and drag you into courts of judicature to sit in judgement upon you, and to condemn, fine and imprison you, and put some of your fellow Christians to death, on account of their profession of the gospel.

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

7. Do they not heave out the most horrid reproaches and blasphemies upon that glorious name on which ye call, and by which ye are denominated *Christians*, and distinguished as related to Christ? Is it not thus with the great men among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

8. If, instead of paying extravagant honours to men of rank and condition in the world, because of their riches, and despising the poor, because of their poverty, ye were impartially to attend to, and fulfil all the duties of the great law of love; which may be called *the royal law*, as it is a most excellent law, formerly enacted by the king of *Israel* under the Old Testament-dispensation; (*Lev. xix. 18.*) and as Christ, the King of the New Testament-church, has established, recommended and enforced it upon all his disciples by new and evangelical motives; (*Matth. xxii. 39.* and *John xiii. 34. 35.*) the purport of which is, you shall treat all your fellow-creatures, and especially your religious brethren, with as much benevolence, justice and mercy, according to their various circumstances, as you would think right and reasonable, and would expect in like cases to be treated yourself. If, I say, ye thus behave towards all ranks and degrees of mankind, and particularly of your brethren in the Lord, from a principle of love, and in obedience to the command of Christ, your Lord and King, ye act an honourable part (καλος) becoming your Christian-character.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors.

9. But if, on the other hand, ye make partial distinctions in shewing favourable regards to the rich, rather than the poor, merely on account of their different worldly circumstances, ye therein work iniquity; (καμπτειν ισχυατος;) and are convicted, reprov'd and condemned, as transgressors of that comprehensive and most excellent law of love, (*ver. 8.*) which includes the particular law, that expressly says, *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgement; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty;*



mighty: But in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour. (Lev. xix. 15.)

9 For who-  
soever shall keep  
the whole law,  
and yet offend  
in one point,  
he is guilty of  
all.

10. For admitting, for argument's sake, that any one were exactly to keep all the rest of the precepts of God's Law; the sum of which is love; yet if he violates it only in one single instance, he, by just construction, is guilty of a breach, though not of the whole of the law, yet of the whole law, and by its sentence is condemned as such; (Gal. iii. 10.) because he as really sins against the authority of the lawgiver by one act of disobedience to any of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and so God is as truly, though not as much, offended by one transgression, as a man is hurt by the injury, that is done to only one member of his body; and the whole system of the law is broke thereby, as a chain is by breaking only one of its links.

11 For he  
that said, Do  
not commit a-  
dultery; said al-  
so, Do not kill.  
Now if thou  
commit no a-  
dultery, yet if  
thou kill, thou  
art become a  
transgressor of  
the law.

11. For the same God, who is said in the moral law, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, has also said, *thou shalt not unjustly kill*, or murder any one whatsoever; both which are contrary to his law of love. Now, if you are not guilty of adultery, or of any uncleanness, in thought, word, or deed; yet if you are guilty of murder in actually committing it, or even in doing, or designing, or desiring to do, what has a tendency to any unlawful way of destroying the life of a fellow-creature, you break in upon the whole of that divine authority, which enacted the law that equally forbids both: And the same holds true with respect to all its other precepts.

12 So speak  
ye, and so do,  
as they that  
shall be judged  
by the law of  
liberty.

12. Let therefore the whole of your behaviour in disposition, word and deed toward fellow-creatures, as well as toward God, be such as is becoming and right for those to be found in the practice of, that live under the Gospel dispensation, and that judge of their brethren, and shall be dealt with in the great day, by and according to the tenor of the Gospel, which is a doctrine according to godliness, (1 Tim. vi. 3.) and both obliges to, and, upon principles of faith and love, sets a man's soul at liberty for an impartial and universal obedience to all God's commands, with a noble freedom and delight, far surpassing all that could be obtained by the *Mosaic* dispensation, from which it has also set him free. (See the note on chap. i. 25.)

13 For he  
shall have judge-  
ment without  
mercy, that hath  
shewed no mer-  
cy; and mercy  
rejoiceth against  
judgement.

13. For he, whose faith doth not work by love, according to the grace and obligation of the Gospel, so as to shew compassion to his poor brethren, shall pass under a severe sentence of condemnation and wrath, to be executed upon him in the day of judgement, with-

out any mixture of that mercy, which is held forth in the doctrine of Christ: And, on the contrary, he who, as the fruit of his faith, exercises tenderness and loving-kindness, toward them, shall rejoice in his deliverance from condemnation and wrath, and against fears of being cast in judgement\*: and divine mercy, according to the gospel, shall triumph in his favour, and glory over strict justice according to the law, in the final day of account, agreeable to our Lord's own representation of it. (*Matth. xxv. 34—46.*)

14 What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

14. Of what advantage then, my brethren, can it be to any man, if, at the same time, that he talks and boasts of his believing in Christ, and expecting salvation by him, he has no good works springing from his faith, to prove the sincerity of it? Can such a sort of notional faith, and his profession of it, that has no prevailing influence upon him to holiness and obedience, be effectual unto his salvation? No certainly; It is not, in reality, what it pretends to be, as may be illustrated in the following manner.

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food;

15. Suppose any Christian brother or sister were all in rags, and had not cloaths sufficient to cover their nakedness, and keep them warm; and at the same time were ready to perish with hunger, through want of necessary food for the present day's subsistence. (*ταῦτ ἐκρημίζῃ τροφῆς*).

16 And one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

16. And if, in such deplorable circumstances, any of you were to say to them, with an air of pity and concern, poor distressed creature! Your case is very miserable indeed; I wish you well, and should be glad to hear of some good Providence's appearing for your relief; go your way with a satisfied mind, in hope that God will provide necessary raiment to cover you, and food convenient for you: But, though it be in the power of your hands, ye nevertheless give them no manner of assistance that is necessary for them; What signify all these fine words and professions of good wishes? They are all mockery, instead of cordial affection; and can be of no avail either to them, or to your own souls.

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

17. Just so the case stands with respect to *Faith*, in God's account, whose judgement is according to truth, if it don't produce spiritual and holy fruits of righteousness to his glory, and the good of others, it is a mere

#### N O T E.

\* Mercy may here signify the merciful, the abstract being put for the concrete, as the Circumcision sometimes is for the circumcised: or else it may relate to

the mercy of God, which shall be extended to the merciful man, instead of his being dealt with, in a way of justice, according to his deserts.

mere lifeless notion, that has nothing vital or operative in it, as being intirely destitute of every genuine effect, and proper evidence of its sincerity; and it can never be profitable to eternal life, how highly soever any may boast of it, and rely upon it.

18 Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

18. Yea; a true believer may fairly expostulate with, and confound such a vaunting hypocrite, by arguing with him in the following manner: You talk mightily of your faith without giving any proof of its sincerity; and I, on the contrary, instead of taking up with high swelling words and professions of faith, have evangelical works of love and obedience to bear witness that my faith has its proper influence upon me. Now, if your faith is of the right sort, shew it to be so by your practice answerable to it, which I challenge you to do; and I, in like manner, will give the same proof of mine, even beyond all that you can produce of that kind †. Or else demonstrate to me, that your faith is good and effectual, if you can, (which is indeed impossible) without any suitable works to support your confident boastings of it; and I will take a better course for making it plain to you, that my faith is vital and efficacious, by its producing works of holiness in my life; and so, in a just and scriptural way of reasoning, I will substantially prove the cause by its effects, as the nature of a tree is known by its fruits. (*Matth. vii. 16—20.*)

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well. The devils also believe and tremble.

19. If you insist that you have true faith in a fundamental doctrine of all real religion, because you believe that there is a God, in opposition to atheists; and that there is but one only living and true God, in opposition to heathen idolaters; thus far it must be owned that you are in the right, and bear an honourable testimony to the Deity. (*ἁλως νοεῖς*) But if you rest in a bare assent to this important point, it will be of no avail to your Salvation: for the very demons themselves, those wicked spirits that are consigned over to everlasting destruction, believe this as well as you; not

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## N O T E.

† The paraphrase on this verse takes in both the *marginal* and *textual* reading in our translation. According to the *marginal* reading *by thy works*, which is supported by several good copies, (*Vid. mill. in loc.*) it may be considered as the true believer's challenge of the boasting professor to produce that evidence, which hitherto had not appeared; and engaging to join issues

with him on that score. But according to the *textual* reading *without thy works*, which seems most agreeable to the nature of the argument, it may be understood as a suggestion of the impossibility of proving the truth of faith without good works, as its fruits; and of the advantage that he has, in point of evidence, who can demonstrate the cause by its effects.

one of them all can deny it; and they tremble at the thought of his power and justice, which, perhaps, is more than you do: But if you have no better faith than this, you have reason to be afraid, and must one day tremble before his terrible Majesty, as much as they.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man that faith without works is dead?

20. But, O foolish empty professor of religion, (xvi) you who take up with such a bare persuasion, as has no practical influence upon your life and conversation, and yet flatter yourself that all is safe and well, will you not consider, nor lay to heart, that, whatever your pretences and professions be, a mere doctrinal faith, without some correspondent works, as its product, to prove that 'tis of the right kind, is, as has been observed, (ver. 17.) a dead worthless name and form, which has no life or activity in it; nor can be effectual to any saving advantage; Let me illustrate this in an example or two.

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

21. Was not *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, from whom we *Jews* are descended, and in whom the carnal *Israelites* amongst us boast, as though their relation to him would secure their happiness? Was not he himself proved to be a sincere believer, \* and so his faith

#### N O T E,

\* It is evident to me, that *Abraham's* being justified by works could not relate to the justification of his person before God: because in that sense he was justified long before upon his first believing, even before he was circumcised, *Rom. iv. 10, 11.* nor could it relate to what some call the *secondary* justification; for this, according to them, depended upon his *final* preserving in good works, whereas the works here specified were performed several years before his death. Nor can the other instance of *Rahab's* being justified by works (ver. 25.) relate to her own personal justification, with regard to her spiritual state: for there is not the least appearance, that this faith of her's was for justification to eternal life; or that it had any reference to *Christ*, or to the *types, prophecies* or *promises* of him, who was the object to be believed in for a spiritual and eternal salvation: and her works were only the fruit of that faith which she had relating to temporal salvation, and so proved that she really did believe that the Lord had given *Israel* the land in which he dwelt, and that he is God in Heaven above and in earth below; and this faith operated so strongly in her, as to put her upon making terms

for her own and family's safety from the destruction, that was coming upon *Jericho*, (see *Josh. ii. 8—13.*) and the author to the Hebrews takes no notice of her justification, but only says, with a reference to the destruction of that city, *by faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.* (*Heb. xi. 31.* see the note there.) but there was nothing of justifying faith in all this: no, nor in that other instance, which our apostle alledged (ver. 19.) of him that believes there is one God, which the devils also believe and tremble. These observations seem to lead us to an easier solution, than I have met with, of the difficulties that have been raised about reconciling this and the following verses, which spake of a man's being justified by works, and not by faith only, with the apostle Paul's doctrine of justification alone by faith without works, which he so much insisted on, *Rom. iii. 28.* and *iv. 1—6.* and *Gal. ii. 16.* and in several other places; for it appears by the instances which the apostle James here argues upon, that, except in the case of *Abraham*, it is not, so much at least, about justification by *Christ*, through faith in him, as about the justification

faith justified, or demonstrated to be effectual, by his eminent works of obedience, when, at God's command, he fully determined, and actually attempted, as far as God permitted him, to offer up *Isaac*, his beloved and only son of the promise, upon the altar, which he had prepared for that purpose? (*Gen. xxii. 1—12.*)

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

22. Don't you hereby plainly see, how effectually his faith operated in producing these remarkably eminent works of unreserved subjection and obedience to God; and how, by performing those works, his faith was manifested to be a completely true and right faith, that had no defect in any thing essentially belonging to it?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled, which faith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.

23. And as this was an undeniable proof of the reality and power of his faith, that passage of Scripture was hereby evidently shewn to be fulfilled, (see the note on *ver. 21.*) which spake of him long before, saying, (*Gen. xv. 6.*) *Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness*, that is, He believed in the promise of God, that the Messiah should be one of his seed; and that he believed concerning him, and in him, for it was graciously accepted, and placed to his account, for righteousness to eternal life. (See the note on *Rom. iv. 3.*) And upon the proof he gave of the truth of this faith in offering up his Son, from whom the promised Messiah was to come, as believing *that God was able to raise him up even from the dead*, (*Heb. xi. 19.*) The Lord spoke with high approbation of this signal evidence of his faith, saying, after the manner of men, *Now I know that thou fearest God; seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:*

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(Gen.

## N O T E.

Justification of the truth and sincerity of faith in God and in his promises; which he shews to be dead, and altogether unprofitable; unless it be proved to be genuine by its practical influence upon the heart and life to all holy obedience; and so he speaks of justifying a man's faith, or his character, as a sincere believer, to free him from the charge of *hypocrisy*; and not of the justification of his person, to acquit him from a charge of guilt, and from law condemnation, as to his state before God, which the apostle *Paul* so often affirms to be *by faith without works*. There is therefore no real contradiction between these two apostles; since it is a quite different sort of faith and of justification, which

they respectively speak of, and that with a view to different sorts of persons. The apostle *James*, to confute licentious *subtilties*, shews that all notions and professions, even of faith in God, without good works to justify its sincerity, are vain; and the apostle *Paul*, to confute those *self-justifiers* that were for depending on their own works, as the ground of their acceptance with God to eternal life, shews that *justification in his sight* is only by faith in Christ and his righteousness, without any mixture of works, as ingredients into it, though it be not by such a faith in him, as is not productive of good works, they being inseparable from all saving faith of the operation of God.

(Gen. xxii. 12.) And he was afterwards called *the friend of God*, (2 Chron. xx. 7. and Isa. xli. 8.) as one in covenant with him, (which was solemnly renewed and ratified, with an addition of more explicit promises, on this occasion, (Gen. xxii. 16.—18.) and as one, that had manifested the most dutiful and affectionate obedience to his command, and was owned as his peculiar favourite, and taken into the nearest communion with him, as his friend.

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

24. Ye therefore may plainly discern from hence, that a true believer's character is justified against a charge of hypocrisy, or of empty speculation and profession, by the good works he produces, as the fruit of his faith, and not by mere pretences to faith, which is dead, as being alone, without suitable works. (ver. 17.)

25 Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way.

25. I would also instance in another person, even a *gentile*, whose faith was not so strong as *Abraham's*; was not the character of *Rahab* the harlot, who dwelt at *Jericho*, justified by her works, which unquestionably shewed that she firmly believed God would certainly deliver that city up to *Israel*, (see the notes on ver. 21. and Heb. xi. 31.) when, upon that faith, she kindly entertained the messengers which *Joshua* sent to spy out the land, and directed them to make their escape in a way that might prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, who sought to kill them; and engaged the spies to shew kindness to her and her father's house, and save them alive! (*Josh. ii. 1—16.*) By these examples you plainly see how necessary works of obedience are to demonstrate the sincerity of any one's faith in every case whatsoever.

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

26. For it appears from all this, that as the human body without breath, or without a soul to animate it, is a loathsome dead carcase, very offensive, and utterly incapable of discharging any functions of this life; so all that sort of faith that is not efficacious for bringing forth good works, which are the inseparable effects and tokens of a living faith, really is, and shows itself to be, intirely dead and detestable in a spiritual sense.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How natural is it for carnal minds to judge according to outward appearance! and to be influenced by the gay dress and splendid ornaments of the rich, so give them an unjustifiable preference: and by the mean apparel of the poor, to use them with contempt and scorn, whatever their respective religious characters be! surely, this sort of partiality proceeds from a very corrupt bias of the heart. But how unsuitable is this to the temper and behaviour of true believers in Jesus Christ! the professors of his name ought to consider, that God has mostly chosen the poor of this world to faith and all its riches here, and to the inheritance of his heavenly kingdom hereafter, which he has promised

mised, without respect of persons on external accounts, to all that heartily love him; and the poor among them, as much as the rich, are members of the Lord of Glory. They should likewise recollect, that wickedness, oppression, and blasphemous reproaches on the blessed name of Christ, by which it is their honour to be called, chiefly reign among persons of rank and figure in the world; and that, though decent respect is to be paid to all, according to their civil stations; yet favouring the rich rather than the poor, in religious affairs, or in matters of right and wrong, is exceeding sinful. It is a transgression of the moral law, by a breach of which, were it only in one point, a man becomes guilty of breaking its whole system, and as really affronts the whole of its divine authority, which equally enjoins obedience to every one of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and it is a direct violation of that noble comprehensive law, which requires us to love our neighbours as ourselves; yea, is utterly contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel of the grace of God, which may be called the law of liberty, but leaves no room for any to expect favour and mercy in the judgement of the great day, who are not constrained by its endearments to shew love and mercy to the poor, especially of the household of faith. What signify fine words of pity and compassion, and empty wishes of all needful supplies to hungry and naked Christians, without doing any thing according to our opportunities and abilities, for their relief? They are all mere pretence and hypocrisy. And must we not, with equal truth, pronounce, that all notions and professions of faith, unless it be productive of, and evidenced by good works, is a vain and dead faith? It can never be proved to be otherwise. Though Abraham's and Rahab's works, did not justify their persons before God, yet they justified their faith, and shew'd it to be true and genuine before men, as it was apparently practical in them severally; but a bare assent of the mind, without holy effects on the heart and life, is no better than the faith of devils, who believe there is one God, and tremble for fear of him, as all mere notionists in religion one day will. Upon the whole then, it must be concluded that faith without works is as dead and offensive to God, as any human carcase, that has no soul to enliven and actuate it, can be to us. And he is a vain man indeed, who imagines that such a faith can save him.

## C H A P. III.

*The Apostle cautions against an arrogant assuming temper and behaviour, and against the mischief of an unsanctified and unruly tongue, 1---13. and shews the excellency of heavenly wisdom, which discovers itself in purity, meekness and peace, in opposition to that which is litigious, carnal and worldly, 14---18.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**M**Y brethren be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

**T**AKE heed, my Christian brethren, lest many of you affect to be (διδασκαλοι) teachers of others without sufficient qualifications for it; and much more, lest they give way, like the Jewish doctors, to a magisterial and censorious temper in matters of religion; as being fully convinced that the

more any of us indulge and act according to it, the greater will be our sin, and the more severe our sentence of condemnation at the last day, (*Mat. vii. 1-5.*)

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in a word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

2. For it must be owned that all, even the best of us, are daily guilty of many slips and falls, that are transgressions of both tables of God's holy law, offensive to him and to our fellow creatures, which should make us very humble and modest in our thoughts of ourselves, and sparing in our censures of others. But if any one, like David, (*Ps. xxxix. 1.*) is enabled to keep a bridle upon his tongue, that it utter no opprobrious, false, or other sinful words, from a predominance of any corrupt or excessive passion; (see *ch. i. 21, 26.*) he is a sincere believer and finished Christian; (see the note on *1 Cor. ii. 6.*) is a man of rich attainments in knowledge and experience, integrity and holiness; and is furnished with such divine assistances, as are sufficient to curb all the irregularities of his conduct, and to spread an amiable influence through all the members of his body, and the whole behaviour of his life, to the advantage of every religious and civil body that he is related to.

3 Behold we put bits in the horses mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

3. To illustrate the benefit of a due government of the tongue, observe how we deal with the horses we ride upon. We do not let them run at random, but bridle them with bits in their mouths, to check and restrain their mettlesome sallies, and direct their course that they may move according to our pleasure; and by this means we turn their whole bodies to the right or the left, and into one and another road, just as we think proper.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of three winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm whithersoever the governor listeth.

4. Observe also how men use to manage the largest ships at sea in sailing; which though they are such huge vessels, and sometimes tossed about and driven out of their course by contrary and tempestuous winds, are nevertheless turned about and directed into their due bearings again, by so very small an instrument as the rudder, which way soever he at the helm is minded to steer them.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth?

5. In like manner, a man's tongue is indeed a very small member, in comparison with the whole bulk of his body; and as it is of great use, when properly managed, under the influence of divine grace, for directing the whole series of life; so, if it be left under the power and conduct of an un sanctified carnal heart, it talks at an extravagant rate with all the airs of haughtiness and contempt of others. And pray take notice how, by injurious language, it, like a spark of fire in the



the midst of a combustible matter, kindles a terrible flame of contention and confusion all around it.

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of itself.

6. And an unruly, furious and abusive tongue is really one of the worst of fires; it vents a great deal of sin; is the outlet of the whole source of wickedness that lies in a man's heart; (*Matth. xv. 18.*) and is the cause of abundance of iniquity amongst others; such a mischievous and destructive member is this little one amidst the other members of our bodies, that, by its exorbitant licentiousness, it spreads guilt and defilement through the whole man, and kindles such wrath and anger in our own and other people's passions, as throw the whole course of the moral world into a pernicious ferment, which runs through (*τοῦ τροχὸν τῆς γενεῆς*) the whole circle of every generation, and the whole rotation of life, from youth to old age: And as all this evil is of a hellish nature, and is kindled and blown up by the diabolical influence of the accuser of the brethren, and father of lies; so the tongue, together with the man who lays no restraint upon it, will at length be tormented in the unquenchable flames of hell fire, (*Luke xvi. 24.*) and that most justly, since such a violent tongue is more refractory and unmanageable, than the wildest and fiercest of all the lower ranks of creatures.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind:

7. For all sorts of savage beasts and wild fowls, and creeping animals, (*ἑρπετῶν*) even venomous serpents, and voracious fishes and monsters of the sea, (*ἰαμαζῖται*) are by human labour and art subdued and kept within bounds, and have been brought under confinement and restraint, and mastered by mankind, who still retain something of the original grant of dominion over them. (*Gen. i. 26.*)

8 But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

8. But when any one's tongue launches out in revilings, falsehoods and other malignant speeches, under the power of strong, furious, and vile passions, it is more untractable than all these; no man upon earth can master it by his own power and skill, nor can any other man gain an entire conquest over it: It is a most ungovernably evil instrument, spitting out the venom of pride, malice, envy, reproach and falsehood, and all sorts of wickedness, which are as destructive to a man's own soul, and to the welfare of society, as the most mortal poison is to the body: *The poison of asps*, the most desperate of all others, *is under such a man's lips* (*Rom. iii. 13.*)

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Fa-

9. An un sanctified tongue runs so much at random that some of us, who as men, and much more as professing Christians, ought, like *David*, to count it our  
Glory

ther; and there-  
with curse we  
men, which are  
made after the  
similitude of  
God.

10 Out of the  
same mouth pro-  
ceedeth blessing  
and cursing.  
My brethren,  
these things  
ought not so to  
be.

11 Doth a  
fountain send  
forth at the same  
place sweet wa-  
ter and bitter?

12 Can the  
fig-tree, my bre-  
thren, bear olive  
berries? either  
a vine figs? so  
can no fountain  
both yield salt  
water and fresh.

13 Who is a  
wise man, and  
endued with  
knowledge? a-  
mongst you? let  
him shew out  
of a good con-  
versation his  
works with  
meekness of wil-  
dom.

glory, (*Pf.* xxx. 12.) and to employ it in celebrating the praises of the Lord, use it, one while, for speaking honourably of God, praying to him, and offering up thanksgivings and praises in public and private, even to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers in him, the Father of Mercies, and the author of our beings and of all our enjoyments; and, at another time we abuse it, pouring out revilings and horrid imprecations and curses upon our fellow creatures, for whom we ought to have a reverence, as they were originally created after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and are still formed after his likeness in the natural faculties of their rational souls, and in their dominion over the creature; and are renewed according to his holy image by regenerating grace.

10. So that out of one and the same mouth come forth blessings and praises in one mood, and curses in another. Certainly, my Christian brethren, these contrary uses of the same tongue are monstrously incongruous and absurd; and ought, by no means, to have any place in those who make a profession of Christ and his gospel.

11. They are as utterly inconsistent with true religion and godliness, as it would be to suppose that streams of contrary qualities proceed from the same opening of one fountain. Did ye ever know? Or is it possible, in the nature of things, that one and the same spring could gush out at the same place, and flow abroad in streams of water, some of which are quite fresh, and agreeable to the palate, and others entirely brackish and distasteful?

12. Or can a fig tree, my brethren, produce the fruit which grows only upon olive trees? Or was it ever known, that a grape vine brought forth figs? Why, full as inconsistent is it to suppose that a man's heart, the fountain from whence all his words proceed, should freely and habitually vent itself in ways of talking, that are of as directly contrary a nature, as the salt water of the sea, and the sweet water of the finest spring are one to the other.

13. Who is there then among you, that would approve himself to be wise toward God, and for himself and others; prudent in his conduct; and endued with the true knowledge of God, of Christ, and of himself; and with a spiritual discerning of the absurdity and self-contradiction of these things? Let it be his great care and concern, that, by an honourable deportment in the church!

church and in the world, he may evidently practise all manner of good works, in the whole course of his conversation, with a meek and humble spirit, which proceeds from, and discovers the truest wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

14. But if, instead of such a laudable temper and behaviour, ye give a loose to your sinful passions; and your hearts are full of envious, quarrellsome and contentious dispositions and designs, which are a bitter torment to your own souls, and, when breaking out in words, are grievously stinging and wounding to others: Never be fond or boast of such a malignant temper, that is so directly contrary to the meek and humble spirit of the gospel; nor dare to conceive, or utter any falsehood to put a fine gloss upon it; nor make any hypocritical pretences to sincerity or prudence in such a course of life.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish,

15. Whatever any may think of it, let me tell you, that this sort of pretended wisdom does not come from heaven, nor is God the author of it; but it proceeds entirely from an excess of earthly and sensual propensities to the things of this world, which unregenerate men are under the power of; and is excited by the devil himself, bears his image, pleases him, and promotes his interests and designs for doing mischief.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.

16. For wherever an envious, censorious, and litigious spirit is indulged, and breaks forth from the heart through the lips, its natural tendency, and ordinary effect, is nothing but disturbance and destruction to the peace and happiness of a man's own soul, and of all about him, together with every other kind of iniquity and calamity.

17 But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and goodfruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

17. But the wisdom that is heavenly and divine, as coming down from the Father of Lights, (Chap. i. 17.) and tending to heavenly happiness, is just the reverse of all this: It has, in the first place, a strict regard to purity of doctrine and manners in heart, speech, and behaviour; and then, as far as is consistent with truth and holiness, it studies the things that make for peace; and in order thereunto, it disposes the soul to be mild and courteous in its treatment of others, and in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves; (2 Tim. ii. 24. 25.) and to be easily persuaded to all that is good, to be open to conviction, and attend to all reasonable considerations for condescension and forbearance; it also abounds in acts of kindness and compassion to the poor and afflicted, and in every other fruit of righteousness; together with a generosity that has no respect of persons, and that lays aside all severity and partiality in

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

in judging and condemning others; and with a sincerity that is free from dissimulation. (*Rom. xii. 9.*)

18. And the principle, productive of this righteous behaviour, is sown, like good seed, in the peace of a believer's own mind, and of his Christian brethren, and of the world all around him, as in a fertile soil; and shall be reaped in a plentiful harvest of prosperity here, and for ever hereafter, by those, who, in a way of spiritual wisdom, are disposed unto, and lay themselves out in promoting, such a pure and holy peace.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What cause have we to be modest and humble, instead of indulging an arrogant and censorious temper towards our Christian brethren, while we consider, in how many things we all offend against God and them! And what an aggravation would inobservance of our own and severity on others faults be, of self-condemnation at the great day! How important is a due government of of the tongue! he that obtains help from God to rule his own tongue is a great proficient in religion, and well qualified for ordering his whole conversation aright. Though the most mettlesome horses are governed by a bit and bridle, and the largest ships, when driven by contrary and boisterous winds, are reduced to their proper course by a small rudder; and the most wild and savage animals of the earth, air, and sea, may be, and have been brought into subjection by humane art; yet no man of himself can get such a mastery over his tongue, as thoroughly to bridle its excess; nor can any other man effectually cure its malignity. Though it be but a little member, and if well managed, is of great use; yet when it flies out into bitter expressions, it is an unruly evil, and is like a spark of fire that sets abundance of combustible matter into a flame. It is indeed the worst of fire, that spreads confusion, defilement and destruction through the whole man, and amongst all around him; derives its original from hell; and is in danger of everlasting fire, without one drop of water to cool it. But O how monstrously absurd, and inconsistent is it for the same mouth to utter the praises of God, and horrid imprecations upon men that are formed after his image! This is as directly contrary to the Christian character, as it would be to suppose that one and the same fountain can send forth sweet and bitter, fresh and salt water at the same opening; or that a fig-tree can bear olives, or a vine figs. If therefore the heart and tongue are full of envy, animosity and angry contentions, we ought to be ashamed, instead of glorying in them. For if any, that boast of their wisdom, give way to these pernicious evils, it is all a false pretence; it is only the wisdom of the flesh, which proceeds from earthly and sensual passions and appetites, and is propagated by the devil himself after his own likeness. But he who, with a meek and humble spirit, walks honourably, as becomes the gospel of Christ, is endued with the most excellent wisdom and spiritual understanding. This man's wisdom has its original from heaven, and shall issue in heavenly happiness; it has a strict regard to purity in principle and practice; and then, in full consistency with this, it studies the things that make for peace with all affability, and perswadeableness to every thing that is right; and abounds in compassion to the afflicted, and in all beneficence, as occasions require, without any partial respect of persons, or hypocritical pretences to more than we really mean. And O the blessed fruit of such a wise and holy deportment! They, who thus study and endeavour to promote this excellent sort of prosperity and peace, are therein sowing seed, which will spring up to their own comfort here, and everlasting joy hereafter.

## C H A P. IV.

*The Apostle cautions against corrupt affections, as the root of wars and quarrels, and the bane of prayer; and against an inordinate love of this world, as enmity with God who gives grace to the humble, 1---6. Directs proud and carnal professors to submit and betake themselves to God, and resist the devil, and to abandon and lament their sinful courses, in order to their being exalted, 7---10. and exhorts all professing Christians to speak candidly one of another, and to undertake no affairs of life without a constant regard to the will and providence of God. 11---17.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**F**R O M whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?

1. **A**S I would fain excite you to a just abhorrence of the evils that lie in opposition to the peace but now recommended, (*chap. iii. 18.*) Let me ask you, and leave the answer to your own consciences, What is it that gives rise to and foment the dreadful contentions, animosities and broils that have spread so much misery and confusion among mankind and professing Christians, as they have among you of the Jewish nation? † Does not the root and source of them all lie in your corrupt affections, such as pride, envy, covetousness, and an immoderate thirst after dominion over others, or after the riches, honours, or pleasures of this world, each of which intemperate appetites contend for the mastery in all the powers of your souls, and over all the members of your bodies, (see the note on *Rom. vii. 5.*) and all together war against them, to their defilement, injury and ruin, and against the dictates of reason, religion and conscience, and even against the spirit of God himself in his holy operations?

2. Ye

## N O T E,

† Some have thought that the apostle here refers to the seditions, tumults and wars that raged about this time among the Jews in their quarrels one with another, and rebellions against the Romans to throw off their yoke, and obtain to themselves that temporal dominion, which they vainly imagined they had a divine right to; and that some Jewish Christians joined therein from their carnal notions of the Messiah, as though he were to set up a temporal kingdom among his dis-

ciples, and make them Lords of the universe. — But as the national wars were in *Judea*, and are supposed to have been after the time of writing this epistle, we may rather understand the apostle to speak of contentions and quarrels in general, which on various occasions prevailed among the Jewish professors of Christianity; and, alas! have sadly broke out among other professors of it, all along, in public and private life, to this very day.

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?

Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spi-

2. Ye inordinately desire and pursue a gratification of your guilty passions; and cannot compass your criminal designs: ye are ready to devour one another; and have an envious reach (*ζαλννν*) after the possessions of others; and are not able (*ικννν*) to gain the advantages, which ye so greedily covet; much less can ye find your happiness in them: Ye still continue to strive and contend furiously for victory, wealth and grandeur; and yet fail of obtaining your own ends, and so meet with perpetual disappointments; because ye do not seriously ask counsel of God to direct your way, as to what ye ought to do, and to succeed your attempts, as far as they may be agreeable to his will.

3. Or, if at any time ye pray for prosperity in your affairs, your prayers are not answered; because your principles, motives and ends, in asking the things you would have, are all wrong; not, as they ought to be, that ye may use them for the glory of God, and your own and others real good, but that ye may riot upon them, and spend them in a profuse indulgence to your own vanity, ambition and luxury, which is very offensive to God.

4. Whosoever ye be, whether of the male, or female sex, that under a religious character, as God's covenant-people, have such eager appetites after the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, as alienate your hearts from him, ye are guilty of no less sin than spiritual adultery, in admitting a competitor with him, to whom ye are visibly betrothed, as your spiritual husband. Do you not understand and consider so plain a point as this, that an excessive fondness for the great and good things of this world, and a conformity to worldly-minded men in following their sinful courses to ingratiate yourselves with them, and to obtain those things, stand in direct opposition to the holy nature and will of God, and are utterly inconsistent with that supreme love and affection which ye owe to him? (*1 John ii. 15. 16.*) Whoever therefore is so attached to the things of this world, as to place his chief happiness in them, and will court the friendship of the men of this world, at any rate, to procure them, is in heart an enemy to, instead of a friend and lover of God, and takes the part of his adversaries, instead of siding with him.

5. Are ye so vain as to suppose, that those Scriptures of the Old Testament stand on record to no good purpose, or are not worth regarding, which strongly re-

ric that dwell-  
eth in us lusteth  
to envy?

monstrate, in many passages, against pride, envy, covetousness, and the like, and which give us such a view of the corruption of human nature, as shews that the temper, which abides and powerfully works in us, 'till we are renewed by Grace, is so impetuous and ambitious in its pursuits after earthly things, as to carry the soul into envious thoughts of those that have more of them, than we have ourselves †? Or, on the contrary, do ye vainly imagine, that the spirit of God which dwells in us, who are true believers, excites such a carnal worldly disposition in us? No, this cannot be the nature, tendency, or design of his holy influence upon us.

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

6. But, on the contrary, in whomsoever the Spirit dwells, he, or God by him, gives them such a gracious impression as tends to humility, self-denial, love and all goodness; and gives a greater abundance of it, than to leave them under the power of any corrupt affections. Therefore, to encourage their hopes and prayers for all needful assistances, he speaks in his holy word, (*Ps. xviii. 27. and Prov. iii. 34. and xxix. 23.*) as our blessed Lord himself also doth, (*Matth. xxiii. 12. and Luke xviii. 14.*) to this effect, God sets himself, as it were in battle array, (*avtictatras*) with indignation and disdain, against those that are ambitious and haughty, self-conceited and self-sufficient, as placing their confidence and happiness in the things of this life, or in their own wisdom, or strength, or deserts; he drives them away from his gracious presence, who thus set themselves against him; and defeats their aims at honour and esteem among men. But he extends his favour to, and bestows his special grace, with growing strength and vigour, upon the lowly in heart, who have such humbling thoughts of themselves, and of the emptiness and vanity of all creature-enjoyments, as to place their hope and happiness intirely in him, (See *Prov.*

#### N O T E.

† By the spirit that dwells in us some understand the corrupt disposition, which is naturally in our hearts; and others, the Spirit of God, who is often said to dwell in true believers. If we take it in the first sense, the whole verse is to be considered as one question; or if we would take it in the last, it must be divided into two, as in the paraphrase; one or other of which appears to be the most probable sense among the numerous obscure interpretations that have been given of this verse, a very large collection of which

is made by *Esius, Parsons*, and others. And if the last of these interpretations be admitted, which is supported by criticism in *Glossins*, and *Dr. Whitby*, then the relative *he*, at the beginning of the next verse, refers to the spirit, or to God, ver. 4 as working by him. But which ever of these ways we go into for explaining the words, what the Scripture says seems not to refer to any particular passage, but to the doctrine of the Old Testament, as that may be gathered from many places, which are recited by *Parsons*.

Prov. iii. 34.) So that to those, to whom he has given the grace of *humility*, he gives still more grace of every kind, according to their wants and desires; and exalts them in his favour, and in the eyes of all good men. (*ver.* 10.)

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

7. In humble dependence therefore on his free favour and gracious influence, yield themselves up, with an obediential and unreserved subjection, to the guidance and disposals, authority and will of God, as manifested by his word and providence; and be content with such things as ye have. Whatever Satan may suggest against this; or whatever attempts he may make by his subtle devices, or fiery darts, to dishearten you in, or draw you off from, the way of duty, give no place to him; (*Eph.* iv. 27.) but *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand, and resist him stedfastly in the faith*; (*Eph.* vi. 10. 11. 13. and 1. Pet. v. 9.) and he will flee from you, like a vanquished enemy that dares no longer to encounter you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double minded.

8. And as ever ye would effectually maintain your ground, prevail against him, and get rid of all his temptations. Be earnest and importunate in humble and fiducial approaches to God, through Christ, on a throne of Grace, in a way of *duty*, and he will certainly come near to you in a way of *mercy* and *faithfulness*, for your direction, relief and comfort, according to his promise. (*Jer.* xxix. 13.) And whereas some among you have, through the suggestions of Satan and your own evil hearts, become grievous sinners before God, see that you wash your hands in innocence, and so compass the altar of the Lord, (*Psa.* xxvi. 6.) *lifting up boldly hands in your prayers, without wrath and doubting*; (1 Tim. ii. 8.) and remember that *if ye regard iniquity in your hearts, the Lord will not hear you*. (*Psa.* lxxvi. 13.) Beg of him therefore to enable you to cleanse your hands from violence and blood, extortion and bribes, and every other sin, with which they have been defiled: and to purge your hearts from pride, covetousness, envy, and the whole source of iniquity, which work within you, that ye may abhor, renounce, and utterly depart from them; and may be so thoroughly reformed in heart and life, as to behave no longer like double-minded professors, whose thoughts and services are divided between God and the world. (*Chap.* i. 8. see the paraphrase there.



9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law, but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one law-giver, who is able to

9. In serious reflection upon all your abominations, let your souls be deeply impressed with penitential sorrow, as those that sincerely and bitterly lament, and weep over them, and for the miseries they have brought upon you, or exposed you to: Let all your jollity, mirth and gaiety, which ye have shamefully indulged in gratifying your sensual appetites, be turned into ingenuous and evangelical mournings; and all your carnal pleasure into a religious grief and sadness of heart, on account of your provocations, and for fear of God's judgements.

10. In this manner, lay yourselves at the foot of God with the lowest prostration and self-abasement, as offenders of his sacred Majesty, and with an affecting conviction that he knows your hearts and principally looks at them, and observes all the secret workings of corruption, on one hand, and of contrite sorrow on the other, that pass within them: And he, in his own time and way, will revive your drooping souls with a sense of his pardoning, and with recovering grace; will raise you up above all your fears and troubles, temporal and spiritual; and will exalt you to honour among his people in this world, and to immortal glory in the world to come.

11. But to return to the vices of the tongue, (*Chap. iii. 5. &c.*) Be very cautious, my brethren in the Lord, of censoring and reviling one another, or of aggravating and needlessly exposing each other's faults; and much more of raising and propagating false reports to the prejudice of fellow Christians: For he that slanders his Christian brother, to whom, as such, he ought to be most kindly affectionate, and that takes upon himself rashly to judge and condemn him, without any just cause, or for things which are lawful to him, reproaches the law of God itself; and practically arraigns and condemns the wisdom, equity, holiness and goodness, both of the law, which allows of the things he condemns, and of the law, which requires him to *love his neighbour as himself*, (*Chap. ii. 8.*) and forbids his *going up and down as a tale-bearer among his people*, (*Lev. xix. 16.*) and *rashly judging others, lest he himself be judged*. (*Matth. vii. 1.*) But if any of you pretend to set up for censors of the law itself, you do not act the part of a subject in obeying its commands, but assume to yourself the authority of a judge, which do not belong to you.

12. To convince you of the evil of this, consider that there is only one author and giver of the law, and none but he has authority to enact and execute it, relating

save, and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?

to religion and conscience: He therefore has the sole right of being the lord and judge of his own law; and he alone is able to distribute its rewards to the wrongfully accused, in a temporal and eternal salvation; and its punishments to uncharitable condemners, in present and everlasting destruction. Who then are you, a poor, vain, weak and fallible, yea, sinful creature, that you should take upon you to judge and condemn any one, who is accountable only to his own Lord and Master, and must be saved, or lost for ever, according to the sentence he shall pass upon him? (*Rom. xiv. 4.*)

13 Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain:

13. Let me now a little expostulate with those of you that are so worldly-minded, and so thoughtless of God and his providence, as to promise yourselves long life and prosperity upon earth, and say, with a peremptory air of self-sufficiency and independent confidence, we will go to-day or to-morrow, or whenever we please, to this or the other trading city; and there we will stay a considerable time, and (if need be) for a whole year together, and pursue our traffic or merchandize in buying and selling various sorts of goods, and so enrich ourselves by our own wisdom, care and diligence.

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

14. This is all presumptuous, irreligious, not to say atheistical language, in the hearts or mouths of such frail mortals as ye are, who, together with all your affairs, are in a precarious situation, ever liable to numberless disappointments, and entirely dependent on the sovereign will and providence of God, and know not what a day may bring forth, what turn your circumstances may take, or whether ye yourselves should be in the land of the living another day: For, pray consider, what is your life itself, that ye should talk with such confident assurance of what ye will do for time to come? Ye have no security for any, the least continuance of it, which may suddenly and unawares be cut off; much less can ye be sure of opportunity and ability to compass your designs, one day or moment beyond the present. Your breath is in your nostrils, and your life, with all that depends upon it relating to this world, may well be compared to a fleeting vapour, which rises from the earth or from water, and is visible for a little while, and then is immediately scattered and lost in the atmosphere, and is seen no more.

15 For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this, or that.

15. A contrary way of thinking and speaking therefore becomes you; and whatever schemes or projects ye have formed, and would pursue, it ought always to be with this humble and necessary proviso, if it shall please God to favour our views, we shall continue in life

life for discharging the duties of our stations ; and then, in a dependence on his guidance, assistance and blessing, we intend to transact this and the other business, which by his will we may have opportunity and ability to engage in ; still leaving events with him, *who is our life, and the length of our days ; in whose hand is our breath, and whose are all our ways.* (Deut. xxx. 20. and Dan. v. 23.)

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings. All such rejoicing is evil.

16. But now, instead of talking in this humble creaturely and Christian-like strain, which is so honourable to God, and suitable to your state of unworthiness, and of intire dependence upon him for *life and breath, and all things*, (Acts xvii. 25.) Those of you that leave him out of your thoughts, and of your secular employments, in the manner but now mentioned, glory in your own sufficiency, which ye speak of with a boasting air of self-confidence. Alas ! all ~~such~~ sort of glorying is very shameful ; it is abominable and foolish, injurious to yourselves, and a bad example to others ; and is exceeding sinful and affrontive to God, *whose kingdom rules over all* : (Ps. ciii. 19.) And were ye to reflect seriously upon it, your own consciences, as professing Christians, could not but tell you that it is so.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.

17. This therefore is a high aggravation of your crime, since in this, as well as all other cases, the man who knows what is right and good, acceptable to God, and suitable to the relation he stands in to him, and yet acts in direct contradiction to his light, thereby renders his sin abundantly greater, and more inexcusable and self-condemning than theirs who do the same thing, but, through mere ignorance, have no notion of the evil of it, to restrain them from it ; and the sinner, against the convictions of his own conscience, shall be more severely punished than others in the great day of account. (See Luke xii. 47. 48.)

C 2

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

Alas ! What dreadful work do the lusts of pride, covetousness and envy make in the world ! Hence proceed wars, and all manner of discords that are destructive to civil and religious society, and to a man's own soul : They carry him into wicked desires and attempts, which can turn to no good account ; and either make him cast off prayer, or prevent its ends in asking temporal advantages, that he may gratify his own corruptions, instead of glorifying God, and doing good with them. No wonder, that such carnal prayers are not answered.—() what an enemy to God, and adulterous disaffection to him in professors of his name, is an excessive fondness for any thing of this world ! How justly doth the scripture condemn this sinful temper, which naturally works in us ! And how contrary is it to the suggestions and influences of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in true believers, and freely gives grace, with all useful increases of it to humble souls ; but rejects the proud with abhorrence and disdain ! How unsuitable to our creaturely dependence and Christian character is it, to form and

and prosecute schemes for this world, without a religious sense of, and dependence upon the providence of God, as if our times and the success of our affairs lay in our own hands, though life itself is but as a vapour that soon vanishes away! Surely every thing ought to be undertaken with an eye to God and submission to his will. A contrary way of thinking and talking is a vain-glorious boast, dishonourable to God, and injurious to ourselves and others. It is indeed a scandal to the Christian name, that all or any of the forementioned impieties should be found among gospel-professors; and it is a high aggravation of their sin to go against the light of their own consciences in practising them. O how earnest should we be in our addresses to God for his grace to enable us to submit to his commanding and disposing will, and in bewailing our iniquities, and humbling ourselves before him for them! And what encouragement have we, in this way, to hope for his reviving presence and liftings up! And if, in a dependence on divine strength, we resist the temptations of the devil, he will find us too hard for him, and flee, like a conquered enemy, before us. But how cautious should we be never to imitate his temper, and give him an advantage over us, by slandering, censuring and condemning our Christian brethren for little things, or things that may be allowable in them! This is to set up for judges, instead of obeyers of the law; and is a violation of its requirements to love them as ourselves; ~~and~~ is an invasion of God's prerogative, who alone is able effectually to vindicate its authority: O may it be unto our salvation, and not to our destruction

## C H A P. V.

*The apostle denounces the judgements of God against the rich unbelieving Jews, who defrauded the poor, and lived in luxury and oppression, 1—6. Exhorts the Jewish believers to patience and meekness under their tribulations, which would soon have an end, 7—11. Cautions them against rash swearing, 12. Recommends prayer in afflicted, and praise in prosperous circumstances, 13. Prescribes prayer and anointing with oil for a miraculous recovery of the sick, 14. 15. Directs private Christians to mutual confession of their faults, and mutual prayer, 16—18. And shews the happiness of being instrumental to the conversion of a sinner, 19. 20.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**G**O to now ye rich men, weep, and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

**C**OME now, ye carnal unbelieving Jews, who abound in worldly wealth, and neither have, nor desire a better portion than the things of this life, let me seriously and closely reason with you about the evil and danger of your ways: Ye, of all others, have the greatest cause for bitter sorrow, even to floods of tears and howling lamentation, which ye must soon be forced to go into, on account of the terrible calamities of every kind, that are ready to fall upon you, unless

less you be brought to repentance; and will overtake you wheresoever ye be scattered, and bereave you of all your earthly enjoyments, and of life itself, in the general destruction of your nation; \* and will be followed with still more dreadful miseries in an eternal hell.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.

2. Your ill-gotten and ill-managed treasures are canker'd at the root; such of them as consist of corn and other fruits of the earth, are hoarded up, till they rot and putrify, and bring rottenness into your very souls; and such as consist of your wardrobes are laid by, 'till they be eaten up of moths, and will stand you in no stead; but, like a gnawing worm, will torment your consciences for ever.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

3. Your abundance of gold and silver lies rusting in your bags and coffers, instead of being employed for the glory of God and the good of others, and will soon be as worthless and useless, as old-rusty iron, to your sore disappointment and vexation, and will not profit you in the day of wrath; (*Prov. xi. 4.*) and the sinful methods ye have taken to get and dispose of them will bring the worst of all rusts upon them; will testify against you as covetous misers, that deserve the severest indignation of the just and holy God; and the guilt ye contract thereby will prey upon your bodies, as well as souls, in the fiery delolation that will consume you in this world, and in the unquenchable fire in the world to come. Ye have been laying up goods in store for many years, with vain hopes of finding comfort in them at the latter part of a long life; but, in reality, it has been only heaping them up, as spoils for your enemies, in the destruction of the Jewish nation, and will ultimately prove to be a dreadful *treasuring up of wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God, &c.* (*Rom. ii. 5.*)

4 Behold the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields which is of you kept back by

4. Behold, with horror and astonishment, what all your gains by griping and oppressive means are come to! The just wages of the poor labourers, who have reaped your corn with the sweat of their brows, which ye have fraudulently withheld, directly contrary to the law of God, (*Lev. xix. 13.* and *Deut. xxiv. 15.*) is a

C 3

crying

N O T E.

\* The apostle in this and the following verses apparently points at the days of sore destruction, that were then soon to come upon the Jewish nation, not only in *Judea*, but afterward with wider extent through distant countries, by the ravages of the *Romans*, in the way of God's righteous judgements, for their

obstinate infidelity and other iniquities. But as that was an awful specimen of divine wrath, which should be poured out upon them in the world to come, we may, with good propriety, carry the view forward to the final vengeance that will be executed upon all impenitent sinners at the great day.

fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton ; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just ; and he doth not resist you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

crying sin, which, like the blood of *Abel*, calls aloud to heaven for justice to be shewn unto their relief, and your punishment : *Exod.* xxii. 23. *Isa.* v. 7. and *Habak.* ii. 11.) And the mournful complaints of those, who with toil and labour have gathered in your harvest, are come up as a memorial for them, and against you, before the Lord of Hosts, who hears their cries, and whose kingdom rules over all, to right the injured, and take vengeance on their oppressors.

5. Ye, like the rich man in the gospel, (*Luke.* xvi. 19.) have fared sumptuously every day, and indulged your luxurious appetites, as if all happiness lay in sensual pleasures upon the earth ; and have gone into a merry and lascivious course of life : Ye have rioted upon the bounties of Providence, with as much gluttony and profuseness, as though every day were a festival, in which many beasts are slain for sacrifices to be feasted upon with jollity by the offerers and their friends. (*Prov.* vii. 14. and *Isa.* xxii. 13.) But in all this ye have been fattening yourselves, like sheep for the day of slaughter, which is at hand, when *the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be consumed as the fat of lambs,* (&c. *Pf.* xxxvii. 20.)

6. Nay, over and above all this, ye, like those of your own countrymen that procured the condemnation and death of the Lord Jesus, who is (*τοῦ δίκαιου*) by way of eminence *the holy and just one*, (*Acts* iii. 14. and vii. 52.) have, under pretended forms of law, persecuted as many righteous servants of his to death as ye could get into your power : And ye have done this to the holy professors of his name, who, like him, never offered the least violence to oppose or injure you. But God, who has hitherto exercised long forbearance toward you, will certainly espouse their cause, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant upon you.

7. These are trying dispensations of providence to you, my Christian brethren ; but God permits, and over-rules them for the exercise and improvement of your faith and patience. (*ch.* i. 3. 4. and *1 Pet.* i. 6. 7.) And therefore, though it be ever so unrighteous in your enemies to bring tribulations upon you, ye ought to bear them without murmuring at the holy hand that God has in them, and with all long-suffering meekness and Christian fortitude, till the Lord Jesus shall come to execute judgement on the Jewish nation, and deliver you out of their power ; or shall come by death to rid you of all the troubles of this life, as he certainly will in his time, how great or many soever they be.

(*Pf.*)

(Ps. xxiv. 19.) Observe, for your instruction and imitation, that the farmer, when he sows his seed, does not immediately expect a crop, but quietly waits a great while for the proper season of reaping the excellent produce of the earth; and continues with patient hope for it, till, by the blessing of Heaven, he be favoured with such early rains, as may be needful for bringing up the corn; and with such after rains, as shall bring it to maturity, and plump the ear for the harvest.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

8. In like manner, ye, waiting for heavenly dews to fall upon you, ought to possess your souls in patience, till ye receive the happy fruits of your labours and sufferings, and to maintain a sedate and settled temper of spirit, a stedfast faith and holy resolution for God and godliness, under all present difficulties. And ye need not wax weary and faint in your minds, because ye have not yet received the deliverance which ye hoped for; but may assuredly conclude that it will not be long before it be brought to you: For the signal coming of Christ, with power and great glory, to the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, and the deliverance of his people from all their cruel persecutions, which he foretold; (*Luke xxi. 21. 27.*) and the time of your complete redemption from all the calamities of this life, hastens apace, and is near approaching.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold the Judge standeth before the door.

9. Upon these comfortable considerations, take heed, my persecuted brethren, of groaning out your complaints, (*μεταφρονέετε*) through envy, fretfulness and desire of revenge against those of your nation, that oppress you; or against those of your professing fellow Christians, that are less obnoxious to their rage, as too much favouring their darling notions of a temporal Messiah, lest any of you be condemned for your impatient murmurings and uncharitable censures; for behold, the Lord Jesus, the great Judge of all, is just at hand, as ready to *recompense tribulation to those that trouble you*, his faithful disciples; and to *give you rest* from all your grievances: (*2 Thess. i. 6. 7.*) And therefore ye may calmly refer the issues of all your troubles to him, in confidence that he will soon appear for your help, and save you.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

10. To encourage you hereunto, let me intreat you, my dear Christian brethren, to reflect upon the behaviour of the antient inspired and holy prophets under their sore trials, who were beloved of God, and faithfully delivered their messages to the people in his name, by commission from him; let them be called to mind,

as noble examples, for your support in suffering persecutions, and for your imitation in patiently enduring them with an entire submission to the will of the Lord.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

11. Behold, what judgement we who believe make of the afflictions of the children of God. We are so far from thinking them miserable, or out of favour with him, on this account, that we esteem and call them happy creatures, who are enabled to bear them with resignation, faith, and patience; (*chap. i. 2. 3. 12.*) and so *are chastened of the Lord for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and afterwards reap the peaceable fruits of righteousness* from a sanctified use of them, (*Heb. xii. 10. 11.*) and at last may be eternally saved. (*Matth. x. 22.*) To give you a remarkable instance of this sort, which ye, as conversant with the writings of the Old Testament, cannot be ignorant of. Ye have, doubtless heard of the patient behaviour of Job, that dear and eminent servant of the Lord, with what humble submission and becoming acknowledgements of God, (*Job i. 21. and ii. 10.*) he endured a complication of the heaviest calamities, which Providence brought upon him for the trial and exemplary proof of his integrity; and ye must needs have known what a gracious and happy issue the Lord gave unto them all, in not only delivering him out of them, but also in manifesting himself to him in an extraordinary manner, with high testimonies of his approbation of him, and in restoring to him, with rich advantage, double of all that he had lost. (*chap. xlii.*) Ye hereby evidently see that the Lord is (*πολλοπληγος*) a God of infinitely abounding compassion, and is (*οικτιρμος*) propense, like one whose bowels of love and pity are moved within him, to shew the tenderest mercy to them that fear him, in upholding them under, and carrying them through, and giving them blessed fruits of all their trials and afflictions.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

12. But there is one flagrant sin, my brethren, which the infidel Jews are abominably addicted to, and I would in a special manner, and above all others that men are apt to fall into, through an impatient temper, warn you against, as exceeding affrontive, dishonourable and provoking to the great God, and as every way unprofitable in itself, and utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. What I mean is, that ye would never dare to go into rash and impious cursing and swearing in a passion, or in common conversation, by putting



an oath before all that ye say\*. Let no provocation cause you to swear profanely; nor let any oath be ever used unnecessarily at all, either by heaven, which is God's throne, or by the earth, which is his footstool; (*Matth. v. 34. 35.*)† or by any other oath, which, whatever be pretended, is in effect swearing by the creator of all things, whether his name be expressly mentioned or not. But let your conversation be so evidently dispassionate, honest and upright, that a plain affirmation or denial, such as a bare yes or no, may be sufficient to gain an entire credit to what ye say, lest ye fall under the condemnation of such as *take God's name in vain*, (*Exod. xx. 7.*) or of being either false hearted professors on one hand, or downright infidels on the other.

13 Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.

13. As to your deportment in adversity and prosperity, if any of you be in afflicted circumstances, which is often the lot of God's own people, let him betake himself to solemn and fervent prayer for relief: If, on the contrary, any of you be surrounded with the blessings of providence and grace, to the joy of his heart, let him give a sacred vent to his grateful sentiments, in cheerful thanksgivings and praises to the God of all his mercies, which may be very suitably expressed, by singing forth the honours of his gracious name in psalms and spiritual songs. These duties, which are indeed to have their turns through our whole lives, are especially seasonable in those respective situations.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord.

14. If there be any one among you that labours under a bodily distemper, which is supposed to be inflicted upon him for some remarkable sin, (*ver. 15.* compared with *1 Cor. xi. 30.* see the note there) let him desire the officers of the church, and especially such of them as are endued with miraculous gifts, to come together; and let them pray with, or over him suitable to

#### N O T E S.

\* The words, render'd above all things (*ὑπὲρ πάντων*) literally signify before all; and may refer to the profane

custom of prefixing an oath, in common conversation, to all that is affirmed, or denied.

† The Jews of this age were notoriously guilty of profane swearing, though not always by explicitly mentioning the name of God, yet by one or other of his creatures, which they did not reckon to be binding upon them; but which our Lord told them was, in effect, swearing by the God himself who made them. (see the note on *Matth. v. 34.*) and it seems to be with a special reference to these sorts of oaths, as well as

to all profane swearing in common conversation, that Christ there, and our apostle here, so earnestly remonstrates against them. But this is no argument against taking a solemn oath before a magistrate, or in a court of judicature, on important occasions; provided it be only by the name of God, according to his command. (see *Deut. vi. 13.* and *x. 10* and *Isa. lxxv. 16.* and the note on *Heb. vi. 16.*)

to his case, and lay their hands upon him; (*Mark* xvi. 18.) and, as a sign of healing virtue, anoint him with oil in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, according to his appointment, (*Mark* vi. 13. see the note there) calling upon him to exert his divine power for answering the signal by an effectual cure\*.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

15. And the prayer that is offered up by the elders and the sick person, (*Mark* v. 34. and x. 52. and *Acts* xiv. 9. 10.) with faith in the name of Christ, and with a particular extraordinary dependence on his power for a performance of what is humbly asked of him, shall be owned and succeeded in the Lord's delivering the patient from death, and recovering him to a state of health and strength: And if any particular sins have been the immediate occasion of his disease, they shall be forgiven him; in token, or, at least, as an emblem of which the sickness shall be removed; and, through his own faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of them, they shall be pardoned as to the eternal as well as temporal punishment which they had deserved and exposed him to.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

16. As to your brotherly behaviour in common, be ready on all occasions to acknowledge any offences that ye have given one to another, according to our blessed Lord's own direction; (*Matth.* v. 23. 24. see the note there) or if there be any sins that lie upon your consciences, under a sense of their being the reason of God's contending with you in the way of his judgments, unboast yourself in free and humble confessions of them one to another, as Christian brethren, that ye may sympathise with, and know what to ask of God for each other by turns, as occasions require †; and

#### N O T E S.

\* Anointing with oil was an ordinance for the miraculous cure of sick persons (*Mark* vi. 13.) but since those extraordinary gifts are ceased, as being no longer necessary for the confirmation of the gospel, our faith, in the common course of things, has now no warrant for using that ceremony: much less doth what is here said about it

give any countenance to the papists sacrament of *extreme unction*, which they administer, not with oil only, but with oil and spittle; and that, not for the recovery of the sick, but for a pretended purgation from the sins of those, that are in the very article of death, or past hope of recovery. (*Vid. Par. in loc.*)

† Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, seem evidently to relate to the duty that is to be reciprocally exercised between private Christians, in distinction from what was said in the two preceding verses, about the prayer of those elders, as most immediately intended, who were endued

with miraculous gifts of healing. For the Apostle here speaks of believers in common, and of what they ought to do, and for one another. (*αλλήλους και υπερ αλλήλων*). And to here is no foundation for *auricular confession* to a priest; since what is here directed to chiefly relates to offences which one had committed

and according to the knowledge ye have of one another's afflicted circumstances, be earnest in mutual prayer for each other, that the distressed among you, whether in body or mind, or both, may be healed of all their maladies. (*Heb. xii. 13. and 3 John, ver. 2.*) And, for your encouragement, remember that the fervent in-wrought prayer (*σπουδαῖον*) of a good and holy man, who is himself sanctified and accepted of God in Christ as righteous, and so has an interest at the throne of grace; the prayer that is excited in him, and conducted and animated with a sacred warmth of soul, by the spirit of grace and supplication to help his infirmities, (*Zech. xii. 10. and Rom. viii. 26.*) has a wonderful power with God, and prevails as Jacob's did, when he wrestled for, and obtained the blessing. (*Gen. xxxii. 28.*)

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

17. We have a memorable example of the great efficacy of believing and fervent prayer in the prophet Elijah; he was a frail mortal man, of like natural and sinful infirmities, and of like sufferings and passions with ourselves; and yet was remarkably heard and answered in the very things which he prayed for. At one time, he, not in an angry mood, or with a revengeful spirit, but with great engagedness of heart and believing importunity, begged of God that the bottles of heaven might be restrained, in a way of judgement for the rebuke and conviction of king Ahab and the Israelites, who were fallen into idolatry: (*1 Kings xvi. 30---33. compared with chap. xvii. 1.*) And the Lord so fully answered his prayer, that the clouds of heaven were shut up, insomuch that no rain fell on the land of Israel for three years and a half together, by means of which great drought a sore famine was brought upon the earth. (*Luke iv. 25. see the note there.*)

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

18. After this, in mercy to the people that had been reclaimed from their idolatry, and in confirmation of their faith in the God of Israel, (*1 Kings xviii. 39---45.*) Elijah offered up his earnest prayer again for the return of plentiful and seasonable showers; and it pleased God in a wonderful manner to answer him, by sending an exceeding great quantity of rain from the clouds of heaven

#### N O T E.

mitted against another, and is to be mutual and reciprocal, as the words import; and therefore, if it were to be understood of the people and the priest, it would oblige the priest to confess his faults to the people, as well as the people to the priest, which would scarcely go down with the popish advocates for

this priestly prerogative: and surely it is as much the duty of the people to pray for their ministers, as of their ministers to pray for them; and the prayer, which is said to *avail much*, is called the prayer, not of the *elders*, but of the *righteous man*, as such.

heaven to revive the face of the earth, which thereupon yielded its fruits with rich increase. And God is still, as much as ever, *a God who hears prayer*, and never said to the spiritual seed of Jacob *seek ye me in vain.* (*Psal. lxxv. 2. and Isa. xlv. 19.*)

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

19. To conclude this epistle, in which I have remonstrated against the sins that abound among the unbelieving Jews, and have been too prevalent in some of you, my brethren, who make a profession of Christ's name, whosoever he be among you, that through infidelity or backsliding and apostacy, runs astray from Christ and from the truth of the gospel, in principle and practice, by errors in doctrine and immorality of life; and any one of you in your respective stations, be instrumental in turning him from his erroneous notions, and from his iniquity to God;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

20. Let such an instrument of good consider the importance of this happy change; and when his endeavours are rendered effectual, by divine grace, to produce it, he ought to rejoice and bless God, in this reflection, that he who is so highly honoured, as to be the means of a sinner's conversion, or of a backslider's recovery from the erroneous thoughts, dispositions and courses of his life, to God in Christ, will be the means of saving an immortal soul from spiritual death and eternal destruction; and of leading him into the way of life and peace, in which all his multiplied transgressions shall be covered from the eye of avenging justice by the righteousness of the Redeemer, *which is unto, and upon all that believe without difference;* (*Rom. iii. 22.*) and, by his conversion, many sins will be prevented, which otherwise would have been committed by him, and by others, through his bad example and influence, and would have appeared in open light at the day of judgement.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a snare are the riches of this world to a covetous and carnal mind! They are often got and misused with much guilt, and bring upon their owners the most distressing and aggravated sorrows. The cries of the injured and defrauded, and of the persecuted unto death, go up to the Lord of hosts, calling aloud for righteous vengeance to come down upon their oppressors and murderers; and what these spend in pomp and luxury, or unduly hoard up, will be a swift witness against them, and add to their stock of wrath against the day of wrath in the final judgement.—O what abundance of patience do the saints need in such a wicked and miserable world as this! But what encouragement have they to exercise it, since Christ will soon appear to reckon with all their enemies, and to deliver themselves out of all their troubles! They may learn the great lesson of patient waiting for the salvation of the Lord, from the husbandman, who waits with long patience for the harvest; from the ancient prophets,

phets, who, though dear to God, suffered many tribulations, and were patient under them; and from the eminent example of Job, who, though sorely afflicted for a while, calmly submitted to the divine will, and had wonderful experience, at last, of the tender mercy and compassion of God, which gloriously crowned all. How inconsistent is it with the Christian character to swear by God, or any of his creatures, or any petty oaths, in a passion, or in common conversation! And how becoming, to behave with such apparent integrity at all times, as shall engage a firm dependence on the truth of his bare affirmation, or denial! How prayerful should he be in affliction, and how full of praise in prosperity! And if the Lord, in the way of his righteous judgement, lay any disease upon him for some particular sins, he should desire the prayers of the officers and private members of the church, as the ordinary means, that God in the present state of things, in which miraculous gifts of healing are ceased, will own and bless for his recovery, whenever, upon the whole, it may be for the best: For the believing fervent prayer of a righteous man, that is animated by the Holy Spirit, has great power with God to obtain whatever is most for his glory and agreeable to his will. An eminent instance of this we have in the answers which were given to the prayers of Elias, a man of like human and sinful passions with ourselves, for shutting and opening the bottles of heaven. But how becoming is it for Christians, in special cases of offence given to their brethren, or of burden upon their spirits, or of divine rebuke, to make frank and open confessions of their faults to each other, that they may the better sympathize with, and know how to order their prayers for one another! And since there are so great numbers of notorious sinners that run astray in principle and practice from the truth and holiness of the gospel, How encouraging is it for ministers and private Christians too, to do what in them lies for their conversion; and what an honour and pleasure to be instrumental thereto! Since he who is the means of turning any transgressor from the evil of his ways to God through Christ, contributes, in a subordinate manner, to the saving of an immortal soul from eternal misery, and to the preventing of many sins, and hiding others from the eye of God's avenging justice!

A PRACTICAL  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
First general epistle of the apostle PETER.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the First Epistle of PETER.

**T**HE apostle Peter, as he himself tells us, was the penman of this, and the second epistle that bear his name. And they are most probably supposed to have been wrote, the first either about the year of our Lord 65 or 66, and the second a year or two afterwards; not long before the apostle's martyrdom at Rome. (see Dr. Whitby's preface for confuting the popish pretence, as though the first were written about the year 44, or 45.)

The inscription of this epistle directs it to *the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia*, which seems to be much of the same import with the inscription of the apostle James's general epistle to *the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad*, though the tribes of Israel are not expressed in this inscription as they are in that.

However, the introduction to Mr. Peirce's paraphrase and notes on the epistle to the Hebrews, and Dr. Benson's history of St. Peter, &c. would maintain that both the epistles of Peter were wrote rather to the Gentile than Jewish Christians, who were scattered in the various provinces above-mentioned. But as all their reasonings and criticisms are, in my account, far from being conclusive; and as canvassing them might not be much to the edification of the common Christian, for whose use my paraphrase and notes are most immediately intended, I shall not trouble him with them: and, perhaps, they may in good measure be answered, by only supposing, (as I think we naturally may) that the apostle principally designed such Jewish converts as were scattered throughout those countries, though not to the exclusion of such Gentile believers, as were mingled with them; in like manner

as the apostle Paul wrote to the Gentile Christians, though not to the exclusion of Jewish believers, in most of his epistles to particular churches.

Several considerations incline me to think, that our apostle had chiefly a respect to Jewish converts in both his epistles: for Peter was, in a peculiar manner, the apostle of the circumcision; and therefore it seems highly improbable, and out of character, to suppose that the only epistles he wrote were to Gentile, and not Jewish converts; and our thoughts are led to these by several hints in the epistles themselves. He considers them as persons who were redeemed from their vain conversation *received by tradition from their fathers*, (chap. i. 18.) which the Jews had been most notoriously and criminally fond of. (see Matth. xv. 2, 3. Mark vii. 3, 8, 9. and Gal. i. 14.) the apostle also speaks of *believing women*, as the daughters of Sarah; (chap. iii. 6.) which could not be said with just propriety of any but her descendants; since the covenant, by which Gentile believers come to be the children of Abraham, was made immediately and expressly with him, and not with Sarah his wife: the apostle's discourse about political and relative duties, in the second and third chapters, seems to have been occasioned by Jewish prejudices against being subject to heathen magistrates and masters: his *beseeching them to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles* (chap. ii. 11, 12.) carries an intimation of there being a distinct people from them: the judgement which should *begin at the house of God*, and was just then at hand, (chap. iv. 17.) evidently relates to the destruction of the Jews and their temple, which most nearly concerned those of that nation. And in his second epistle he speaks of *always putting them in remembrance, as long as he was in this tabernacle, and of endeavouring that they might always have them in remembrance after his decease*; (chap. i. 12---15.) which may point us to his ordinary personal ministrations, as well as to his writing these epistles, and best agrees to his office, character and work, as the apostle of the circumcision. And his *stirring up their pure minds, by way of remembrance, that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets*, (chap. iii. 1, 2.) intimates, that they had been before conversant with those words. It may also be very likely, that what he mentions of his *beloved brother Paul's having written to them*, (ver. 15) refers to his epistle to the Hebrews.

Upon the whole then, as I apprehend, we may abide by the common opinion that both these epistles were written mostly, at least, for the use of Jewish professing believers in Christ, who were dispersed through the several places above mentioned in the inscription of the first of them.

The design of the apostle in this first epistle was to establish those converts in the faith of Christ, as their foundation; and to comfort them under severe persecutions; (chap. i. and ii. 1---8.) to engage them to an honourable conscientious and winning behaviour among the gentiles; and particularly to a faithful discharge of all the duties

of their civil and family relations, (chap. ii. 9 *ad fin.* and iii. 1---7) and to an exercise of all the duties of brotherly love among themselves, and of their respective stations in the church; concluding with a prayer, that the God of all grace would, in and after all their terrible sufferings, strengthen and settle them in their faith and hope; and that they all might have peace in Christ Jesus. (chap. iii. 8. to the end of the epistle.)

## C H A P. I.

*The apostle salutes the professing believers, to whom he wrote; and blesses God for his special benefits to them through Jesus Christ, in which they rejoiced under all tribulations, 1—9. shows that salvation by Christ was foretold in ancient prophecy, 10—12. and exhorts them to all holy conversation, suitable to their principles, privileges and obligations, 13—25.*

## T E X T.

## P A R A P H R A S E.

**P**ETER an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

**P**ETER, who, by the immediate appointment and commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, was constituted an apostle principally of the circumcision, (Gal. ii. 8.) sends this epistle, under divine inspiration, chiefly to the professing Christians of Jewish extract, who are, not only in a metaphorical sense, but, properly speaking, strangers in foreign countries; as being expelled from their own land, and dispersed, by the Providence of God, in the various gentile contiguous provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the proconsular Asia and Bithynia. †

2 Elect according to the fore-knowledge

2. Who, notwithstanding the former revolt as a nation from the God of Israel, and from his covenant made with the fathers, appear, in the judgement of charity,

## N O T E.

† All these countries, as the best geographers think, lay in what was called the lesser Asia, which was contained in, and spoken of by way of distinction from the large continent that bore the name of Asia. in the three grand divisions of the then known world, America having been discovered in latter ages; and therefore the Asia here meant and distinguished from Pontus, Galatia, &c. must be that which was sometimes called the Roman proconsular Asia, and at others, Asia proper. And the strangers scattered abroad throughout these provinces seem to be meant of those of the tribes of Israel that did not return

from the captivity to their own land, but sojourned in those countries, rather than of those that were dispersed by the persecution spoken of in Acts viii. 1. For these were scattered only throughout Judea and Samaria, though afterwards some of them travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only, Acts xi. 19. But all these countries were far distant from those into which these strangers are said to have been scattered. (Consult Wells's geography of the New Testament.)



of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

charity; by the tokens of his grace upon them in their effectual calling, to be the objects of his special and eternal choice, according to the kind distinguishing notice, which God the Father took of them before all worlds. (See the note on *Rom. viii. 29.*) with a gracious design of bringing them to eternal life, through the renewing and purifying operations of his Spirit on their souls, to engage and enable them to yield themselves up unto all holy obedience to his commandments in heart and life; (*Eph. i. 4.* See the paraphrase and notes there) and to bring them under an application of the atoning blood of Christ, for the remission of their sins, which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the law, and, in that allusion, is fitly called *the blood of sprinkling*. (*Heb. xii. 24.*) May the free favour of God with all its genuine fruits and effects, in their utmost variety, manifestations and fulness; and all prosperity, spiritual and temporal, as consisting of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences, and with one another, and all around you, and every other comfortable circumstance, be abundantly increased towards, and in you!

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

3. When I reflect on the great and blessed things which God has already done for us, whom he hath chosen, redeemed, and called, my heart is filled with gratitude, joy and praise; and ye ought to join with me in cheerful ascriptions of all possible glory and thanksgivings to God, even the Father, who with respect to *the human nature* of Christ is *his God*; and with respect to *his divine nature* is, in a way of peculiarity and eminence, *his Father*; and with respect to *his office-capacity* is *the covenant-God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has raised up and anointed to be the Prophet, Priest and King, and so the complete and only Saviour, of every one of us who truly believe in him. Adored and for ever magnified be his glorious name, who, not according to our deserts, but according to the wonderful riches and multitude of his free and sovereign mercy, in which he chose us, has now begotten us anew by his regenerating spirit, to a joyful hope, which springs from a lively faith, and revives the heart, has spiritual life and vigour in it, and has for its object a resurrection to eternal life, and shall certainly issue in it, through the quickening power and virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and through faith in him, who by his sufferings unto death, has satisfied divine justice for our sins, and by his rising again from the dead for our justification, is publick-

ly owned and acquitted by God the Father, *that our faith and hope might be in God through him. (ver. 21.)*

4 To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

4. Blessed be his name who has given us a new and spiritual birth, whereby we are rendered capable of, and fitted for, as well as intituled by gracious adoption to a noble inheritance, as the portion, answerable to the dignity of his sons; (*Rom. viii. 17.*) An inheritance, not of a perishing nature, as all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are; nor an earthly inheritance, like that of the land of *Canaan*, from which the *Jews* of the dispersion are driven away; but an inheritance which will make a rich amends for the loss of *that*, and of all temporal possessions: An everlasting immortal inheritance, altogether pure and holy, incapable of being itself defiled, or of being enjoyed by polluted souls, or of defiling any that are partakers of it: and never decaying in its worth, sweetness or beauty; but always fresh, entertaining and delightful: A glorious inheritance, consisting of the sublimest and most refined enjoyments which never fade, like the garlands of herbs and flowers with which conquerors used to be crowned; and is an inheritance securely laid up, and kept safe in Heaven, by the immutable purpose and promise of God, and by the meritorious and efficacious mediation of Christ, as a precious inexhaustible treasure for all and every one of you that are begotten to it.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

5. Who, though weak in yourselves, and exposed to innumerable temptations and dangers which would be too hard for you, were you left to your own wisdom and strength to combat with them, are guarded and preserved, as in a garrison, (*ὑποφυλάττεται*) by the almighty power of the great God himself, which is engaged for your preservation and safety against all your enemies, through a daily exercise of faith in its dependence on Christ, and realizing views of future glory, to animate you in your Christian course of obedience, and make you victorious over sin, Satan and the world, (*Eph. vi. 16. and 1 John iii. 9. and v. 4.*) till ye arrive at complete salvation; which salvation is already prepared for you, in the design of God, *from the foundation of the world*, (*Matth. xxv. 34.*) and by the purchase and advocacy of Christ, who, as your head and forerunner, has taken possession of it for you: and which will soon be manifested in all its riches and delights, when he shall appear to judge the world at the last day, and *ye shall appear with him in glory*: (*Col. iii. 3. 4.*) And so ye are as safely kept for this inheritance, as the inheritance itself is for you.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

8 Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see not, yet, believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;

6. In the believing view and hope of all this, ye well may, as I trust ye do, exceedingly rejoice, (as ye shall still more abundantly hereafter) even to an exultation, (*ὑπαλλιασθε*) though at present, in this imperfect state of weakness, sin and sorrow, ye for a little while (if God sees it needful for his glory and your good) are grievously, and yet comparatively speaking, but *lightly*, afflicted, through a great variety of trials from Satan and the world, and from your own infirmities and frailties, which ye are now attended with, and are permitted to be so.

7. To the end that (*ὅνα*) the experiment and proof (*δοκιμὴ*) (See the note on *Jam. i. 3.*) of your genuine faith in Christ, which is abundantly more to its advantage and honour, than the trial of gold can be to it; *as this*, how much soever it be refined from its dross by the fire, is of a perishing nature still, and may be worn away by use, and lose some of its particles in the very trial of it; Whereas true faith is improved and increased, and made to shine the brighter, by the blessing of God, upon its trials, that it may evidently discover itself with such purity and eminence, as shall be to its highest commendation, and shall be openly approved of God, and graciously rewarded with honour and glory, as its fruit and consequence; and as shall ultimately redound to his most glorious praise; when Jesus Christ, (*the author and finisher of your faith*, Heb. xii. 2.) shall be revealed to crown his own work in you, at his second appearing to your complete salvation: And then it shall be found, that *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

8. Though ye, who are far distant from *Judaea*, never saw Christ with your bodily eyes; yet through the revelation which has been made of him to, and in your souls, by his word and spirit, ye have a sincere desire after him, affection to him, esteem of him, and delight in him; in whom, though at present he be out of the reach of your corporal sight, and ye neither see him, as many did in the days of his flesh on earth, and as ye yourselves will in his state of exaltation hereafter, yet while ye realize and appropriate him by faith, and trust in him as your only saviour, ye rejoice in him, and in hope of his glory, even unto a rapture and triumph, with a joy so sublime, heavenly and satisfying, as surpasses the powers of language to express; a joy which is glorious in itself, and attended with all glorying in him; and is indeed a lively foretaste and earnest

of the glory, with which ye shall hereafter be glorified with him. (αγαλλ' αὐτῷ χάρα ἀνέκκλητου καὶ διδοξαμένου.)

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of your souls.

9. When ye, like conquerors in the public games, shall receive as a reward of grace, (τελος) the perfection and ultimate aim of your faith, and the end which it terminates and issues in, even the complete deliverance of your souls, which are the principal part of the man, and the salvation of which will draw after it *that* of your bodies too, from all sin, want and misery; and the advancement of your whole persons to all the felicity and glory of the heavenly state.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

10. Which glorious and blessed salvation, as to be brought about, and clearly revealed in the Messiah's days, was foretold by the antient inspired prophets, who were earnestly inquisitive, and exceeding diligent, like miners digging for precious ore, (ἐξερευνησαν) in their searches after the meaning of their own prophecies, when they spoke many ages ago, concerning the rich and eminent blessings of light and grace, pardon, purity, and peace, hope and joy, which ye should be partakers of, with clear evidence of your own interest in them.

11 Searching, what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

11. They being very solicitous, as *Daniel* was, by studying the sacred writings, (*Dan.* ix. 2.) to find out, to what purpose, and with a reference to what period of time, and what should be the particular signs, by which it might be known, as also whether it should be in days of preceding purity or vice, light or darkness, or of outward peace or trouble to the church, that the things should come to pass, which the spirit of Christ\*, whom he imparted to them, and who guided and acted in them, intimated, when he bore witness, long beforehand in their prophecies, to the things that related to the extremely painful and abasing sufferings of the Messiah, in soul and body, unto death, by which he should be cut off for the transgressions of his people, and make reconciliation for their iniquities; (*Isa.* liii. 8. and *Dan.* ix. 24. 26.) that related to the glories (δοξαι) of

#### N O T E.

\* The Spirit of Christ's testifying the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and his revealing to the prophets, that the testimony related to future ages, were the actions of a divine person, distinct from him, whose spirit he is, and whose sufferings and glory he testified: and his being called the Spirit of Christ, when he beforehand gave this testimony, shews that he as really existed, and was the Spirit of

Christ then, as when Christ after his ascension sent him, (*John* xvi. 7.) And the Father sent him in his name; (*chap.* xiv. 26.) And that therefore he was properly the Spirit of Christ or of the Son, (*Gal.* iv. 6.) As well as of the Father, prior to, and independent of their sending him, in consequence of Christ's sufferings and exaltation, and not merely on account of that mission.

of his resurrection, ascension and exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; and to the glory of the gospel-state, and, at length, of all his members with him, and in conformity to him, which should be the effect and consequence of his atoning sacrifice, and should abide for ever afterwards.

11 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

12. Unto which holy prophets, it was made known by the suggestion of the Spirit, that their predictions were not to be fulfilled in their days, but in after-times; and that, though their own souls were refreshed, and their faith, together with the faith of the godly in those ages, was supported by them; yet that they did not therein so much serve themselves, or the then present generation, as they did us, who live under the New Testament dispensation, and are favoured with its important blessings; which are now openly proclaimed, and faithfully declared to you in the glad tidings of salvation, by them who have published the gospel of the grace of God to you in all its light, liberty, and glory; which has been divinely confirmed by the attending testimony and communication of the holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, as sent down from the exalted Saviour in Heaven, according to his promise: (*John* xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and *Acts*, chap. ii.) which gospel unfolds things so excellent, profound and entertaining, that the holy angels themselves, those bright and happy intelligences, are exceeding desirous, like students greedy of further improvement in the best of all knowledge, to make critical and close inquiries into the manifold wisdom of God that is displayed in them; which was emblematically represented by the cherubim that were placed over the ark and mercy-seat (*Exod.* xxv. 20.) in a stooping posture (*κατακυρτωται*) as though they would accurately pry into the things which were contained therein, and signified thereby. (See the note on *Heb.* ix. 5.)

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

13. Having therefore these revelations and encouragements, with respect to future and eternal blessedness, take heed of waxing weary and faint in your minds: but as persons are wont to gird up the long garments, which are worn in Eastern countries, about their loins, to strengthen them for service, and prevent entanglements or incumbrances, in travelling, running, fighting, or any other exercises; and as the *Israelites* were to have their loins girded at the passover, when they were setting out from *Egypt* for the land of *Canaan*; (*Exod.* xii. 11.) so let it be your continual endeavour, by divine assistance, to gather your loose thoughts and

affections together ; to get rid of the cares and incumbrances of this life ; to moderate your appetites to, and make a temperate use of the things of this world, with holy vigilance. (*προσεύχεται*) like servants that wait for the coming of their Lord. (*Luke xii. 35—37.*) And be careful to maintain a sincere, unshaken, growing and persevering trust and hope in Christ, (*πιστεύετε ἐλπίσιν*) to the end of your days, temptations and conflicts, with joyful confidence and assured expectation of all the bliss and glory of the heavenly state, which is merely the gift of God's free favour, (*Rom. vi. 23.*) and is the perfection of the begun work of grace in you here ; and which shall be brought into your complete and actual possession, when the Lord Jesus *shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ; and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (2 *Thess. i. 7. 10.*)

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance.

14. Behave then suitable to your spiritual, high and noble birth, privileges and hopes, as dutiful children, intirely subject to the authority and commandments, and submissive to the will of your heavenly father in all things : And take heed of falling in with, (*μὴ συνχηματίζομιν*) or being conformed to the corrupt inclinations and desires, schemes, principles, practices, language, and fashions of the men of this world, and particularly of this degenerate age, as formerly, while ye were strangers to Christ and the gospel, and were involved in darkness and error, under the power and dominion of *fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,* (*Chap. ii. 11.*)

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, In be ye holy in all manner of conversation ;

15. But as God is essentially and perfectly holy, who has called you by his grace to the faith and fellowship of his son Jesus Christ, that ye might be a holy people to him ; so ye ought, as far as possible, to imitate and resemble him in the purity and sanctity of your hearts, and of your whole lives and conversation, at all times, in every circumstance of prosperity and adversity, and in every relation in which ye stand toward God and one another, and towards all men, whether friends or enemies, saints or sinners. This ye are obliged unto by a divine command ;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

16. Because God says now to you, as he often did to his antient covenant-people the Jews, as recorded in the writings of the Old Testament, (*Lev. xi. 44. and xix. 2. and xx. 26.*) I demand that ye be a holy people unto me, after my own heart and likeness ; for I, the Lord your God and Father, am a holy God, *of purer*

eyes than to behold iniquity without the utmost detestation of it. (*Habak. i. 13.*)

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

17. And if, answerable to your holy profession, ye from your very hearts call God your Father in Christ, and invoke him in his name, and pay all religious homage to him, who without any partial respect of persons, on account of their earthly ancestors, or external relations and privileges, judges concerning them and passes sentence upon them in his word, and will do so in righteousness by Jesus Christ at the last day, (*Acts xvii. 31. and Rom. ii. 16.*) according to what every one's works now are, and shall then be found to be, whether good or evil, in proof of their being his obedient children (*ver. 14.*) or not. These solemn considerations of God should excite and engage you to an humble and awful reverence of him, and fear of offending him; together with a godly jealousy over your own hearts, and fear of being left to yourselves, for the little time that ye may be here in a state of pilgrimage, passing on through this world, as strangers upon earth, to your own better country and inheritance in heaven, to which ye are begotten, (*ver. 3. 4.*) and which God has prepared for you (*Heb. xi. 9. 10. 13. 16.*)

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers:

18. And ye ought to be the more strongly induced and encouraged to go on in this holy conversation and religious fear, since ye, as true believers, must needs be assured that your redemption and recovery from all the corrupt, empty, defiling and destructive manners and customs, which in the days of your sin and folly ye were brought up in, and went into, as handed down from age to age by the traditions of your rabbies and ancestors, and as taught and practised by your immediate fathers after the flesh; ye, I say, cannot be ignorant that your deliverance from all this, and from its dreadful consequences, was not purchased by so mean a price as the perishing riches of this world, such as the silver and gold which are paid for buying poor captives out of bondage, misery and slavery among men:

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot:

19. But ye know that it was by no less a price, than the noble and invaluable precious blood, sufferings and death of the son of God, as the anointed Saviour, who, through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, (*Heb. ix. 14.*) as an atoning sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, (*Eph. v. 2.*) perfectly holy, and free from all original or actual defilement, flaw or defect, as was typified by the paschal lamb, and the lambs which were offered as daily sacrifices every morning and

even.

evening, under the law, and were to be without any kind of blemish, (*Ex. xii. 5. and Num. xxviii. 3. 4. 9.*) that they might the better prefigure this immaculate and eminent Lamb of God:

20. Who was most certainly intended to be the only true propitiatory sacrifice, long before those legal shadows of him were instituted; yea, who was originally appointed of God hereunto in his eternal decree, before the foundation of the earth was laid; but it was in the fulness of time, that he was sent into our nature and world, (*Gal. iv. 4.*) and so was manifested in the flesh, to redeem them that were under the law; and in these concluding days of the Jewish age, and in the beginning of this last dispensation of God's grace to the church, he was clearly made known, and demonstrated to be the great and only Redeemer of lost sinners, which he really is, and is now openly declared to be for your eternal salvation;

21. Who through him, as the only Mediator, trust and hope in God, as a reconciled God and Father, who, in testimony of his being thoroughly appeased by the blood of Christ, raised up his crucified body from the grave, and exalted him in human nature to the highest honour, authority and dominion, at his own right hand, that ye, encouraged by this unquestionable evidence of his being the true and accepted Messiah, and of his having finished the work which his Father gave him to do upon earth, might place your intire dependence and confidence in God, through him, for all the blessings ye need here, and for a resurrection to eternal life and glory hereafter, ye therein relying upon God as a God of peace and Father of mercies to you on his account.

22. Since ye have been enabled to mortify and subdue the power of those corruptions which formerly defiled your souls, and to become holy in heart and life, (*ver. 14. 15.*) by the obedience of faith, according to the command of God, and the truth of the gospel, (see *Rom. xvi. 25. 26.* and *1 John iii. 23.*) through the powerful operation of the Divine Spirit, who has wrought this happy and holy change in you; and since being thus sanctified through the truth, (*John xvii. 17.*) ye are brought to a sincere, undissembled and hearty affection to your Christian brethren, as such, let it be your daily conscientious care to cultivate this brotherly love, yet more and more, towards one another, not merely in word, but in truth, with all its substantial fruits and genuine effects; and with the intense fervour

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:



23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man, as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away :

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

of a heart purified by faith, and by regenerating grace.

23. Ye being, as I trust, really partakers of a new and spiritual birth, which doth not proceed from mortal seed, like your natural birth, nor from a corrupt principle, which produces only corruptible effects, like what the carnal Jews received, with all its external privileges, by descent, as the natural seed of Abraham ; but is a supernatural, spiritual and immortal birth ; ye being begotten by means of the Word of Truth, (*1 Jam. i. 18.*) which is incorruptible in itself, and in its vital production, and which, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, is of quickening efficacy, and, like its author, remains unchangeably the same in its own nature, and in its immortal virtue for ever ; and so brings forth a nobler birth than can be derived from the most famous ancestors upon earth.

24. For all fleshy descent, with its fairest fruits, may properly be compared to the green grass or herb of the field ; (*1sa. xl. 6. 7.*) and all the natural and acquired endowments of man, as man, and external privileges of any man, in his present state of degeneracy, and all the ornaments of nature and art, as well as the honours of pedigree, which carnal minds pride themselves in, and the Jews boast of in their relation to Abraham ; all this may be likened to the gay and beautiful flower which the grass bears in its verdure ; it all soon fades and dies away, like blighted and withering grass, together with its most showy and admired adornings, that sicken and drop off, like the flowers of the field, when the wind passes over it, and it is gone. (*Psa. ciii. 15. 16.*)

25. But so incomparably more excellent is the word of the Lord, (*1sa. xl. 8.*) and the spiritual birth produced by it, that it always abides the same in its own nature and effects, as the seed which remains in true believers ; (*1 John iii. 9.*) and is ever living and enlivening without decay of its virtue, and will be effectual to make them happy for ever. And this is no other than that divinely inspired word, which contains the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and is communicated to you in the promulgation of the gospel by his ministering servants, and rendered efficacious in the renovation of the whole man, by the blessed Spirit unto eternal life.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a beautiful and harmonious concurrence is there in the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit, for producing faith and holy obedience here, in order to compleat salvation hereafter !

Blessed

Blessed be God, that wherever his grace takes effect upon any of us, we are new born to a happy and glorious immortality; and our souls are purified by the obedience of faith, unto a sincere love of the brethren, through the Spirit, by means of the gospel, which has a quickening virtue, and ever lives in its efficacy to maintain the principle of spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal: We are therein begotten as the children of God, according to his rich and abounding mercy, to a living hope of heaven, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and to an enjoyment, in due time, of that glorious inheritance, which is incorruptible, free from all impurity, and eternally abiding and entertaining, without decay: And as this is made ready and reserved in heaven for us, so we are safely kept by the power of God, through faith, to that salvation, which shall be revealed in all its fulness, grace and glory at the last day, for which we believe in an unseen Jesus. O delightful prospect and security to all that are born of God! How transcendent to the perishing honours and advantages of this life, which fade and die, like the grass and flower of the field! With what transport may their faith triumph in Christ amidst all the various momentary afflictions, which God sees to be needful for them, that their faith being exercised, proved and improved, by means of those fiery trials, to better purpose than gold tried in the fire, may shine with the brighter honour and glory at the final appearing of Jesus Christ!—What a solid foundation for our faith have we in him, who was appointed of God from all eternity to be his salvation; was foretold by the antient prophets, and is now more clearly revealed in the gospel! He came in the fulness of time to redeem his people from all their sins and ruin of the fall, and of traditional corruptions, not with silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish; and his father raised him from the dead, and exalted him in our nature to the highest authority and dignity, that our faith and hope might be emboldened to fix on God, as our reconciled God and Father through him. How surprising and important are these things! The holy angels closely study them; and we ought to do so too, as being more nearly concerned in them.—How affectionately should we love the once suffering and now exalted Saviour, and all our Christian brethren for his sake! How holy ought we to be in obedience to the commands, and in imitation of our heavenly Father, who, as an impartial judge, has no respect of persons, but will pass a final sentence of happiness, or misery, by Jesus Christ, upon the whole world, according to the different kinds and degrees of their works! With what godly fear should we reverence him all the days of our lives! And how should we behave with vigilance and sobriety as pilgrims and strangers, who no longer fall in with the corrupt manners of this world, as in the time of our unregeneracy; but travel through it to our heavenly home, and maintain a stedfast hope to the end of life, that he, who has begun the good work in us, will finish it in eternal glory! May grace and peace be abundantly multiplied to all such!

## C H A P. II.

*The Apostle recommends a temper suitable to their character, as born again, and a daily recourse to Christ as their only foundation, 1—10. Directs their holy conversation among the gentiles, 11, 12. Exhorts subjects and servants to pay all proper obedience to their civil governors and masters, 13—18. And to be patient in imitation of their suffering Saviour under all hardships that might be wrongfully laid upon them, 19—25.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**W**herefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.

2 As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1. **S**INCE therefore ye are partakers of a new and spiritual birth, whereby ye are formed for purity and brotherly love, (*chap. i. 22, 23.*) ye ought to put off, cast away, and utterly abhor, as ye would old rotten and filthy garments that are unfit to be worn, all manner of wickedness or naughtiness, (*πασαν κακίαν*) (see *Jam. i. 21.*) and particularly all malicious, spiteful and revengeful heart-burnings, designs and practices against your fellow Christians, or any one whatsoever; together with all frauds, deceitful flatteries and insincere compliments; and all hypocritical professions of religion toward God, and of respect, love and friendship to others; as also all envious grudging and repining at their prosperity; and all backbitings, defamations and detracting words, which proceed either from a guileful, or malicious, or envious disposition of the heart.

2. And as all these defiling and pernicious evils are to be intirely abandoned; so, as new-born infants long after the mother's milk, ye, under a feeling sense of your wants, ought to have eager appetites for, and earnest desires after the pure, uncorrupted word of God, (*ἁγίου λόγου*) as containing proper food and nourishment for rational and immortal souls, that ye may grow in knowledge and grace, comfort and holiness, and in all spiritual strength and stature unto a perfect man in Christ, (*Eph. iv. 13.*) by means of that very word of the gospel by which ye were regenerated, and *which lives and abides for ever.* (*chap. i. 23.*)

3. Ye not only ought to have, but ye certainly will have an utter aversion to all sin, and an appetite to the good word of God, (*ver. 1, 2,*) in case ye have really had, as I hope, an experimental acquaintance with, and a true relish and savour of, the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus to your own souls, though it be but as a taste

taste, in comparison with what ye shall hereafter enjoy in, and from him.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

4. To whom ye are to be daily applying by faith for all further edification, support and establishment, as unto the only foundation of all your security, hope and happiness; which, in allusion to the foundation of the temple, in which the Jews glory, may be compared, not only to a stone for solidity and strength, firmness and duration; but, by way of eminence, to a living stone, \* as he has life in himself, and communicates quickening influence, and ever lives to animate all that are united to him, and built upon him. He is indeed despised and rejected, as by the Jewish rulers, ( Luke xx. 17. ) so by all carnal Jews, and unbelievers, who *see no form, comeliness or beauty in him to desire him*, ( Isa. liii. 2. ) and *will not come to him, that they might have life*: ( John. v. 40. ) but he was chosen of God, and appointed to be the foundation of his church from all eternity; ( chap. i. 20. ) and is most excellent in himself, dear and honourable in the sight of God his Father, ( who has highly exalted him ) and in the esteem of all that believe in him, ( ver. 7. ) as compleatly able to bear the whole weight of God's glory, and the salvation of his church, which he has laid upon him.

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

5. And ye, thus coming to him, are, as it were living stones, ( *οὗς ζῶντες λίθοι* ) as being spiritually alive by derivation from him, in virtue of your union with him, who is your living and enlivening foundation; and are erected and edified in the noblest manner upon him, being *built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit*; ( Eph. ii. 22. ) all the parts of which building are of a spiritual nature, such as God delights to dwell in after a more gracious and beneficial manner, than he ever did in the temple, which was built of the most beautiful stones: ( Luke xxi. 5. ) ye are also become more excellent priests to God, than those under the law, to bring and present, not ceremonial and typical sacrifices, like them, much less atoning sacrifices, like that of our Lord; but spiritual offerings of self-dedication, prayer and praises, alms-deeds, and all sort of

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\* *A living stone* in the literal sense may be thought an inconsistent idea. But as this and several other expressions in the following verse are evidently metaphorical, and designed to signify Christ as a spiritual foundation, and his members as the building erected upon it, in allusion and preference to the temple at Jerusalem, which the Jews look'd upon as their highest glory; there is a striking beauty, vigour and em-

phasis in the language, and no more impropriety in Christ's being spoken of as *a living stone*, than as *living bread*, and *a living way*, ( John vi. 51. and Heb. x. 20. ) To shew his excellence above all other bread, or ways. And the apostle Peter's speaking of him, under the metaphor of *a living stone*, shews that he did not account himself, but Christ only; to be the *Foundation-Stone* of the church.

of fruits of righteousness, (Rom. xii. 1. Phil. i. 12. and Heb. xiii. 15. 16.) which are well-pleasing to God, and graciously accepted of him, through, and on account of the propitiatory sacrifice and intercession of Christ, the only mediator, who has reconciled you to God, introduces you to him, and renders both your persons and services acceptable in his sight.

6. Accordingly, we have a testimony of the following purport concerning Christ, as it is contained in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, (Isa. xxviii. 16.) observe, says God, with attention and holy admiration, faith and hope, love and joy, I, the sovereign Lord of all, have of my own mere good pleasure appointed and provided, fitted, prepared, and placed the Messiah in my Church\*, as a sure foundation and chief corner-stone, which has been tried and proved, and found effectual, to unite Jews and Gentiles, the Old and New Testament Church, and cement all the members of both firmly and compactly together; and to add strength and beauty to them; a stone, which I, in infinite wisdom and grace, have chosen for this purpose, which is excellent and honourable in itself, and exceeding dear to me. And whosoever he be, whether Jew or Gentile, a greater or lesser sinner, that depends intirely on Christ, or builds by faith on him, as his sure and only foundation, shall never be ashamed to own him, or be confounded by any of his enemies for professing his name, nor shall he ever be ashamed or confounded, through any disappointment of his hope in Christ, as they are, who inconsiderately build on a sandy foundation, and whose vain confidences are defeated, through rash and precipitate measures, and and over-haste to accomplish them: (see the note on Rom. ix. 33.) but he shall have boldness in the day of judgement, (1 John iv. 17.) as one discharged from guilt and condemnation, and made perfect in holiness and happiness, through the Redeemer's righteousness.

7. He therefore is a high honour, (τιμή) and cannot but be of high esteem and indearment to you who believe in him, and build all your hopes intirely upon him; he, in his person, offices and benefits, and in his relation

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto

\* In Zion may likewise possibly refer to Jerusalem, which is often called Zion and mount Zion in the psalms and the prophets; and so God's laying this chief Corner-stone in Zion, may point to the place where our Lord finished the work of redemption; where the glad tidings of salvation by him were first published, and from thence spread abroad; (Isa. cx. 2. and Isa. ii. 3.) And

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where the first gospel-church was erected on this foundation. (Acts ii. 41.—47.) But as Zion and mount-Zion are very commonly used for God's church and people in the Old Testament; and in Heb. xii. 22. I have rather chose to give the paraphrase in that sense, as most agreeable to the current of the context.

them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

relation to you, is altogether lovely in your account, and is, and forever will be, your crown and glory, honouring you, and honoured by you: but to them who, being disobedient to God and him, and to his word, set him at nought, and reject him by unbelief, this very stone, which the Jewish rulers, who pretended to be, and ought to have been, the builders of the church of Israel, would not receive, but disapproved of, as the foundation of the gospel-church, according to a prophetic account of him and them; (Ps. cxviii. 22.) even he is by the ordination and settlement of God, notwithstanding all their spite and rage against him, the foundation, chief corner-stone, strength and glory of his spiritual house.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them, which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

8. And at the same time, according to another prophecy, (Isa. viii. 14) he is become, like a stone that lies in mens way, at which they stumble and fall to their hurt; and like a rock, which they rashly dash themselves against to their destruction; he is so to them, who are offended at the doctrine of the gospel, which sets him forth as the only foundation that God has laid, and besides which no other can be laid, to answer its end; (1 Cor. iii. 11.) they being obstinately unbelieving and refractory, to which God, in his holy sovereignty and righteous judgement, purposed to leave them, as to the free choice of their own perverse hearts; and, for which, he determined that this stone should fall, and his justice should be glorified on them to their utter ruin. (see the note on Rom. ix. 18.)

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

9. But ye, who are built upon Christ, as your foundation, are, in the best and most valuable sense, partakers of all the blessings that were signified by the external privileges and national honours of the visible church of Israel: (Exod. xix. 6. and Deut. vii. 6.) ye are a new-born generation and kindred (*γενος*) of spiritual and noble birth, whom God has set apart for himself by eternal choice, and effectual calling: ye have an unction from the Holy One, and are *kings and priests unto God*, (Rev. i. 6.) as, like *princes*, ye have power with him, and victory over sin, satan and the world, together with a holy dominion over your own spirits, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; and as, like *priests*, ye are separated from the rest of the world, and consecrated to God for offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ: (ver. 5) ye are also a holy society formed into one spiritual body, like a nation collected together, under Christ your Lord

and

and King, sanctified by his spirit, governed by his laws, and embarked in the same common cause and interest. And ye are a purchased and special property to him; that, suitable to your dignities, privileges, blessings and obligations, ye might both really and intentionally display the glory of divine virtues and perfections, such as the infinite wisdom and power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth of God; and might shew forth, in word and deed, his honour and praise, who has called you by his grace, and delivered you from the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and misery; in which ye were formerly involved; and has brought you into the most wonderful and affecting light of truth and grace, holiness and comfort, which he has caused to shine in your hearts: (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

10. Who, for ages past, have been disowned of God, and divorced from his visible covenant; (Jer. iii. 8. and Hos. i. 6. 9.) but now by the grace of the gospel through Jesus Christ, are brought into the sweet and abiding relation of a covenant-people to him; and who, during all those former ages, were shut out from the distinguishing effects of his special mercy, but have now found mercy with him, unto the renovation of nature, the forgiveness of sins, and justification of life, according to *Hosea's* prophecy, (chap. ii. 23.) and this, in a higher sense, may be said of those *Gentiles* among you, who are now brought to the faith of Christ, and so become the spiritual seed of *Abraham*. (see the note on Rom. ix. 25.)

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

11. In consideration therefore of these distinguishing favours, which God has bestowed upon you, my dear brethren, whom he has formed for himself, that ye might shew forth his praise, (Isa. xliii. 21.) I earnestly intreat, and exhort you (*παρακαλῶ*) to look upon yourselves as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, who are travelling onward to a better country; (Heb. xi. 13. 16.) and I beseech you, as such, to renounce and keep clear of all those inward workings of sensual inclinations, inordinate affections and desires after earthly things, which arise from the corruption of nature, and exert themselves by the body; and are contrary to the liberty, peace and honour, purity and holiness of your renew'd souls; and, as the work of all enemies, are engaged in a perpetual war against them, and do their utmost to defile, disturb, ensnare and destroy them.

12 Having your conversation honest a-

12. Take heed that the whole of your behaviour towards, and under the observation of, the unconverted Gentiles,

mong the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Gentiles, among whom ye live, be decent, honourable, and commendable for its amiable beauty, (*1 Pet. ii. 12*) every way worthy of your holy profession; to the end that whereas they seek all occasions to reproach you, on account of your profession of Christ, and to speak against you, as though ye were a refractory, useless and mischievous sort of people, and practisers of iniquity, they may be effectually confuted by your regular, blameless, holy, benevolent and lovely deportment in every relation of life, by means of which, they, as eye-witnesses of it, may be induced to think well of you and of your religion, and may be themselves brought to glorify God, by admiring his grace in you, and by imitating your good conversation in Christ, when they come narrowly to inspect into it, and when he shall look upon them and visit them in his mercy, (*Luke i. 68.*) and shall set his gospel home with light and power upon their hearts; and so render it effectual to their own salvation.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake whether it be to the king, as supreme.

13, 14. In order hereunto, let me guard you against some things that give occasions of great offence to your enemies, as for instance, how strong soever the prejudices of some of you may be, through Jewish notions, against obeying heathen magistrates, remember, that as the theocracy, or that divine form of government, in which God was the King of Israel, is expired, it is now your duty as Christians, to be subject in all matters of a civil nature, to every secular power, which is legally set over you by the appointment and consent of the community; which, on that account, may be called the ordinance of man; and yet is the ordinance of God, as he has appointed and ordered it for the good of human society, and by his providence directs and inclines bodies of people to set up such a form of it, as they apprehend to be best for the preservation of all their civil and religious rights, liberties, privileges and properties, and for their protection and safety in an enjoyment of them: (see the notes on *Rom. xii. 1. 2.*) And ye ought to submit yourselves to its rulers in obedience to the command of the Lord Christ, (*Matth. xxii. 21.*) and for the honour of his name, that it may not be evil spoken of, as though he were the author of a religion which subverts the laws and rights of civil society. Ye therefore should think yourselves obliged in conscience, to pay cheerful obedience in all lawful things to unbelievers, as well as others, that hold the reins of government where ye live, according to their political



14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15 For *th* is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men :

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

political character and authority ; whether to the sovereign, such as a king or emperor, like the Roman Cæsar ; or to subordinate magistrates, like the governors of provinces, and inferior officers, as those that are deputed by him, and act under his commission, in the several parts of his dominions, to execute the just laws of the country, according to the ends for which God has appointed their authority ; as particularly for inflicting deserved punishment upon those that are immoral and profane, disobedient to the just laws of government, injurious to the lives and properties of others, and disturbers of the public peace ; and for protecting, encouraging, favouring and rewarding those who behave as becomes faithful subjects, and are orderly, sober, honest and benevolent in their stations. (*Rom. xiii. 3—5.*)

15. For it is the declared will and command of God, and well-pleasing in his sight, that, by a regular and commendable course of life, ye disprove, and stop the mouth of unreasonable and wicked calumnies which men of weak and prejudiced minds, who are strangers to God, and to your true character, would raise against you and your religion, as if it made you bad subjects.

16. It is his will, that ye conduct in such a manner, as becomes those, who, as his free men, are indeed delivered from the tyranny of sin and Satan, and from the ceremonial yoke, and the curse of the moral law ; and are free from all obligations to submit to impositions upon conscience by any authority of men : And he requires, that ye never turn this liberty into licentiousness ; nor make pretences of asserting it, as a cover to sedition and wickedness, (*the xianins*) or any malignant evil whatsoever ; but that ye use it only for such good purposes, as God approves of in them that are his servants, as well as free-men ; and are bound to do every thing in obedience to him, as your supreme Lord and King, who has the highest demands upon you, and enjoins the duty we owe to him, and to others, according to his will.

17. Under this conviction therefore, see that ye esteem, and pay a suitable respect, on every occasion, to all ye have to do with, according to their several ranks and stations, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, Christians or heathens, as far as any commendable thing appears in them. Entertain and express the most affectionate love to your believing brethren of all denominations, as members of Christ, and of the

household of faith together with yourselves. Do every thing with a religious, filial, and reverential fear of God, and of offending him, like true worshippers of him, who always act with a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Upon this principle, and as far as is consistent with it, behave as loyal subjects in paying all civil homage and respect to the person and office of the chief ruler, as such, whom God in his providence has invested with legal dignity and authority over you, even though, like Nero the present emperor, he be a heathen prince and inveterate enemy to Christianity.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward.

18. As to those of you who are (*δοῦλοι*) household servants of every rank, whether slaves or not, that may be persuaded to think yourselves no longer obliged to pay obedience to unbelieving masters, it certainly is your duty to be humbly submissive to their lawful orders, with a becoming reverence of them, whatever be their religious character; and to serve them with fidelity, and fear of offending them, and of offending God by disobedience to their just commands. (Col. iii. 22.) This duty is to be paid, not only to such masters as are generous, kind, meek, and merciful in their temper and behaviour; but even to those also, who are austere and morose in their carriage to their servants, especially if it be only because they are Christians.

19 For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

19. For it is matter of praise, and favours of a gracious spirit, and is (*χαρις*) a free gift of God, and acceptable to him, if any one, for the sake of his religion, and from a conscience toward God, patiently and quietly suffers abusive, grievous and injurious treatment, without any just provocation given by him, or any fault of his own.

20 For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.

20. For what honour to Christ, or to yourselves; or what room for commendation can there be, if, when ye have been guilty of any neglect, unfaithfulness, or misdemeanor, ye are severely beaten for it according to your deserts, and are forced to submit to it, as the fruit and due reward of your own evil doings? There can be no credit to religion, or to you in this: your crime makes such sufferings a reproach, instead of an honour, both to God and yourselves. But if when ye perform the duties of your places with diligence and fidelity, and are conscientious in your religious devotions, and are chastised for it, and bear it with all humble patience and submission; this is an excellent and holy temper, which God freely gives, and is highly pleased with. (*χαρις*.)

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps:

21. For when ye became Christians, ye were called to submit, even with patience and meekness, to injuries and reproaches for Christ and the gospel's sake; because our Lord Jesus himself willingly underwent the greatest sufferings and revilings, in his love and kindness to us\*, and particularly to you, for your advantage, and indeed in your room and stead; and therein, among still higher designs of his death, (see ver. 24. and chap. iii. 18.) left you a most perfect pattern of patience in sufferings, to the end that ye, in love, duty and honour to him, might tread in his steps, as exactly as possible, by imitating him in this, and in the whole of his blameless behaviour.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

22. Who, notwithstanding all the false and malicious accusations of his enemies, never was guilty of the least fault in any one act of his life, but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and went about doing good*: (Heb. vii. 26. and Acts x. 38.) Nor was there ever found the least insincerity, deceit or falshood in his words, or doctrine; nor could the worst of his adversaries ever prove any thing of that kind upon him: But in the most eminent sense, (answerable to *Levi* his type) *the law of truth was in his mouth; and iniquity was not found in his lips*: (Malac. ii. 6.)

23 Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously;

23. Who when he was shamefully reproached, as a blasphemer, an impostor, and one possessed of a diabolical spirit, and was contemptuously spit upon, and derided under the mock-title of a king, never returned the least opprobrious language upon his insolent and impious adversaries: when he suffered the utmost indignities and barbarities in the judgement-hall and at his death, he never discovered the least impatience, nor threatened to avenge himself, as he justly might, and easily could, upon his persecutors; but meekly and calmly referred himself and his cause to his heavenly Father; trusting in him to give righteous judgement between himself and his crucifiers: and at the same time praying, that, instead of avenging their wickedness in murdering him, he would graciously forgive them, through his atoning blood: (see Isa. liii. 7. and Luke xxiii. 34.)

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his

24. Who, being sinless in himself, not only left a matchless example of patience in his sufferings; but cheerfully submitted to them with a still much more

E 2

important

N O T E.

\* Those copies, that read *for us*—*leaving us an example*—*for you*—*leaving you an example*. seem best to compare with the structure of the sentence; since ye were

called—*that ye should follow his steps* are expressed by verbs of the second person plural, *ἐπαγγέλιτο*—*ἐκείνην ὁδὸν*.

own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.

important and endearing view, as he freely became our surety and substitute, to answer for our sins, and bear the punishment that in law and justice was due for them, which *he put away by the sacrifice of himself*, (Heb. ix. 26.) when his body was lifted upon the cross in the greatest extremity of torture, and his soul, which was also made *an offering for sin*, (Isa. liii. 10.) *was exceeding sorrowful even unto death*; (Matth. xxvi. 38.) to the end that, by the merit, and in virtue of his sufferings, we being freed from the dominion, as well as from the guilt of sin, like persons dead to it, might live in all holy obedience, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to God through him: (Rom. vi. 2, 6, 11, 13.) by whose wounds, which were made upon his body by scourgings and piercings, unto the drawing of blood, we, in the application of this sovereign balm, through faith in him, are cured of the worst of all wounds and maladies which sin had made upon us; wounds beyond all comparison worse than any sores that can be made upon your bodies, who are servants, and even slaves, by the severest stripes that the most cruel masters can lay upon you. This therefore should thoroughly reconcile you to them, and quiet and comfort you under them.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

25. For ye, while left to yourselves in your unconverted state, were, like wandering sheep, even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, running astray from God, from his fold, ordinances and commandments, and running from the ways of truth, righteousness and peace, into every sinful and dangerous path that leads to eternal destruction: but now, through the enlightening and renewing operations of the spirit, by means of the gospel, (*εὐαγγέλιον*) ye are turned back from the error of your ways to Christ, that *great Shepherd of the sheep*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) and kind observer, visiter and inspector, or overseer of your precious and immortal souls, that he, taking a tender care of you as his charge, may feed and nourish, guide and govern, heal and defend you from all evil, and conduct you safe to glory.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

No mother's milk can be more eagerly desired, or better relished by hungry infants than the pure unadulterated word of God is by new born souls, for their spiritual nourishment, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. And O how precious is Christ to them, who as living stones are built upon him as their living foundation, which God has chosen, and laid with high approbation in his church! They shall never be ashamed of their faith and hope in him, and profession of him, how much sorer others may despise, reject and stumble at him to their own destruction, through the wilful disobedience to which God justly determined

determined to leave them, and for which to punish them. But how great are the privileges and blessings of true believers! Though they were once strangers to God, and wandering in the paths that take hold on hell, they have now found mercy with him, who has chosen and called them out of miserable darkness into joyful light; and has made them a holy and peculiar people, yes, kings and priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God with acceptance through Jesus Christ. He has bore their sins on the cross, and taken them away by the sacrifice of himself; he has healed their spiritual maladies by being wounded for them; and has reduced them to himself by his grace, that they may be under his inspection and care, as the great shepherd and overseer of their souls. How strong and endearing then are their obligations and encouragements to be continually coming by faith to him; to abandon all malignant thoughts and words, and all sensual appetites that war against the purity, peace and happiness of the soul; to behave as pilgrims and strangers on the earth; to die to sin, and live to righteousness; and to order the whole of their conversation in such an honourable manner, as may silence gainsayers, and recommend religion to them, and be the means of inducing them to glorify God, when he shall visit them with his grace. How should this laudable behaviour run through all relations of life, upon principles of conscience, and for Christ's sake, that the liberty wherewith he has made his disciples free, may not be turned into a cloke for licentiousness! They ought to be dutifully subject to the laws of civil government, and to supreme and subordinate rulers, who are appointed of God for the preservation of liberty and property, and of the public peace, by suitable rewards and punishments. Due respect should be shown to all ranks of mankind, and especially to Christian brethren, in the fear of the Lord. And servants particularly ought to be obedient in all lawful things to their masters of every character, and to be careful that they never be guilty of any fault to bring them under corrections, which would turn to their own shame. But if, through the morose and wicked tempers of their masters, they be scourged for righteousness sake, and patiently endure it; This, as to themselves, is acceptable to God, and what they, as Christians, are called to. And O what a complete and animating example of well-doing and of patience in sufferings, has our crucified Lord set them, and all of us who believe in him, that we might tread in his steps! He was intirely sinless, free from all deceit; and never returned opprobrious language, or impatient threats, for the most infamous and cruel abuses; but left himself and his cause with God, trusting in him for all events. And how should we be excited to bear our sorest trials with a like meek and humble spirit, since our iniquities have deserved them at the hand of God, if not of men; and since, by the sufferings of Christ in our stead, the principal end of which was to make atonement for sin, our spiritual wounds are healed, which are every way worse than any that can be made upon our bodies by the utmost severity of men!

## C H A P. III.

*The Apostle proceeds to recommend the duties of wives and husbands, 1—7. Exhorts all Christians to mutual agreement in principle, affection, and kindness, 8—13. And encourages them to patience under persecutions for righteousness sake, in consideration of Christ's having patiently suffered in their stead, and of the rich advantage they have thereby, 14—22.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**L**ikewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives,

2 While they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart in

1. **H**AVING dispatched what relates to the duties of Christian subjects and servants, let us in like manner go on to those of the conjugal relation, beginning with what is incumbent upon *believing wives*; and to such I must say whatever difference there be, as to religion, between you and your lawful husbands, whom ye may have married before ye yourselves were converted, ye ought to behave with an obliging and affectionate submission to them in all reasonable things of a temporal concern, to the end that, if any of them pay no regard to the word of God, which is the ordinary means of conversion, they, though not attending on its ministrations, may be allured and gained over to a good esteem of it, and of Christ and his ways according to it, by the manifest appearance of its powerful influence to produce an exemplary, meek and humble, sweet and engaging temper and carriage in those of you who are wives; ye ought, I say, thus to behave, in hope that this, by the blessing of God, may be the means of bringing them under the hearing of the word, and so of saving their souls, (1 Cor. vii. 16.)

2. While they are daily eye-witnesses of, and observe and reflect upon, the purity, sobriety, chastity and modesty of all your deportment with due respect to them, and fear of offending them; and as doing every thing in the fear of God, with a religious reverence of him, and in obedience to his commands.

3. Let it be the study and endeavour of such godly women to recommend themselves and their Christian profession to their husbands, not by the external ornaments of dress, which (how lawful soever in itself according to their stations,) too many of that sex are apt to pride themselves in, as though it were their chief adorning; such as putting their hair into fine plaits and curls; and wearing gold-rings, bracelets or chains; or garments embroidered with gold; or decking themselves with any such sort of rich and splendid attire, as lewd and light women use, for tempting and ensnaring the hearts of the unwary, (see the note on 1 Tim. ii. 9.)

4. But let it be their principal care, in preference to all other ways of women's setting themselves off, to excel in the inward adornings of knowledge, virtue and truth,

that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

truth, grace and holiness, which, like the *new man*, (Eph. iv. 24.) is seated in the heart, and is the finest dress of the soul, that makes it *all glorious within*; (Ps. xlv. 13.) and, though concealed from outward observation, as it lies in the heart, is discovered by its lovely fruits in the life; and is both durable, and proof against temptations to corrupt it, and incomparably more beautiful, and excellent, and advantageous to the immortal soul, than all the fading, uncertain, perishing and ensnaring pomp and gaiety of outward apparel can be to the mean, frail and mortal body; and consists, among other things, of a modest, humble and gentle, calm, tractable and peaceable temper of spirit, free from pride and turbulent passions: how much soever this may be despised, and the deckings of the body be preferred before it, by vain minds, it is of high account with God, and ought to be the ambition of women that would approve themselves to him, in imitation of the meek and humble Jesus, (Matth. xi. 29.) and as always under God's all seeing eye.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands;

5. For this is the way that holy and religious women took, in former ages, to ingratiate themselves with their husbands, even in the most ancient times, when they had less advantages than there now are, to understand, and excite them to their duty: they, whose hope and trust were in the Lord for all the blessings of this life, and of that which is to come, put on those inward adornings, and recommended and approved themselves, after this endearing manner, to their own proper husbands, in modest reverence and subjection to them;

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

6. Even as Sarah, the beloved wife of Abraham, the father of the faithful, hearkened and paid a becoming obedience to him, in token of which she, with a respectful deference, styled him *her Lord*: (Gen. xviii. 12.) and as ye are her natural offspring: so ye are and will appear to be her genuine children, in the moral and spiritual sense, by a laudable imitation of her in faith and holiness; while, after her example, ye behave well, and cheerfully discharge your conjugal duty toward your husbands, without being terrified with fears of their or any other person's displeasure, on account of your religion, or of their not being mollified in their temper toward you by your winning carriage toward them; and without such unbelieving confusion, as seized Sarah, when the Lord spake of her having a son. (Gen. xviii. 9---15.)

7 Likewise, ye husbands,

7. It is also needful to exhort those of you who are believing husbands, that, on your part, ye take care to cohabit

dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

cohabit and associate on all occasions in a faithful and friendly manner with your wives, and treat them with decency, kindness and good humour, according to the rules of prudence, and that superior knowledge, which ye are supposed to have, by the gospel-revelation, of the duty ye owe to them. Ye ought to pay high respect to the woman, who stands in this nearest of all relations to you, by delighting in her, consulting her comfort and happiness, supporting her credit and authority in the family, providing honourably for her, putting due confidence in her, and never using her like a slave, but as a help-met of great importance to you, who have your own infirmities to be borne with by her; though she, being of a delicate, weak and tender frame, may be more liable to other infirmities of body or mind, that call for your compassion toward her, and your bearing with her. And ye ought to be the rather induced to this, as considering that, in case she be a Christian, she, in spiritual concerns, is upon a level with you, ye being jointly heirs alike of all heavenly happiness, which is the best of life, and the gift of God's free grace equally to you both; and that, if she be an unbeliever, your behaviour toward her ought to be in such an endearing manner, as, by the blessing of God, shall win her over to the faith of Christ, that she, through the riches of divine grace, may be an heir-ess with you of eternal glory; and so may not be sowed in her temper, and prejudiced against joining with you, morning and evening, in family-prayer; and that important duty may neither be neglected, nor uncomfortably and unprofitably performed; nor your spirits be put out of frame for a due discharge of it; nor any of your prayers, whether social or secret, may be prevented, or defeated, through your morose, imperious and unchristian temper and behaviour toward her.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion, one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be con-

8. In fine, as to the duties which equally concern you all in every situation of life, as believers in Christ, labour to cultivate a mutual agreement in the great doctrines and duties of the gospel, and a harmonious temper, feelingly sympathizing (*compunctus*) one with another in all afflictions; maintain and exercise an affectionate brotherly spirit in disposition, thought, word and deed towards each other, as becomes children of the same heavenly Father; shew the tenderest bowels of compassion to those that labour under weaknesses, infirmities, or troubles of any kind, whether spiritual or temporal; and let all your carriage one towards another, and towards all men, be affable, friendly and en-

gaging,



gaging, (*παροτρύνει*) to recommend religion to all around you, by shewing what a sweet influence it has upon your hearts and behaviour.

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

9. Never suffer yourselves to meditate revenge by doing an ill turn to those that have injured you; nor ever revile those that have reviled you; remembering what a noble example of this sort Christ has set for your imitation: (chap. ii. 23.) But, on the contrary, see that ye, like him, and in obedience to his command, (Matth. v. 4. and Luke xxiii. 34.) pray for blessings to those who curse you, and despitefully use you, knowing that ye, as Christians, are called by divine grace, and obliged by the example and authority of Christ, to give into this amiable temper and behaviour, to the end that (*ὥστε*) ye, as the children of God and of his own likeness, may inherit, in temporals and spirituals, whatever shall be a blessing to you in this life, as well as everlasting bliss and glory in that which is to come.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

10. For even as to this present world, whoever he be that is desirous of enjoying life with comfort, and seeing many days of prosperity and peace upon earth; his best way for attaining this end, is to fall in with the divine directions of the following purport, (Ps. xxxiv. 12---16.) Let him bridle his tongue, and cease from all profane and filthy speaking, and from all opprobrious language; and keep the door of his lips from uttering falsehood, or deceit of any kind.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

11. Let him have an abhorrence of, and carefully avoid every thing that is sinful in itself, or prejudicial to others; and practise every thing that is in its own nature good, and beneficial to all whom he has to do with; let him seek the things that make for peace, and do what in him lies, consistent with a good conscience, to promote it in all civil and religious societies, in his family, among his neighbours, friends, and enemies, and between himself and them; and let him studiously and steadily follow after this extensive peace by all prudent and honourable means, and earnestly pursue it when it seems to flee from him, that, through the divine favour, he may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty in this world, till he arrive at the glory of a better. (see Matth. v. 9. and Jam. iii. 18.)

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their pray-

12. For the great Lord of all, *whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong on behalf of them that fear him, and whose kingdom rules over all*, (2 Chron. xvi. 9. and Ps. ciii. 19.) takes special notice of, bears a peculiar affection to, and exercises

ers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

exercises a kind and watchful care in his providence over those that are righteous in his sight through Jesus Christ, and are upright in their hearts and lives; and he is graciously attentive, like one who listens with an open ear to the voice of their supplications, that are offered up with humility, faith and fervor, for help against their oppressive enemies, and for shewing them seasonable mercy of a temporal as well as spiritual nature, according to what he sees to be best for them. But the indignation of the Lord, like that which appears in the stern, angry and wrathful countenance of a powerful and provoked enemy, is utterly averse to, and burns against all evil-doers, as a detestable generation, *to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* (Psal. xxxiv. 16.)

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

13. And as the Lord bears these contrary dispositions toward the righteous and the wicked, which are all in his hands, and under his dominion, where is the creature, whether man or devil, that shall be permitted to destroy your truest happiness, or work your ruin, or bring any greater hardships upon you than you shall be enabled to bear and triumph over with honour and advantage, if, in an entire dependence on him, and devotedness to him, ye be imitators (τῇ ἀγαθῇ μιμηταί) of God in his goodness and holiness, or of any one, who, from a conscience toward God, doth that which is benevolent, and acceptable to him? This will keep you out of harm's way, and ye will be safe under his care. And what monster of human nature can be supposed so very wicked and cruel, as to seek the hurt of such an inoffensive and beneficent neighbour?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

14. But if, after all, the providence of God should suffer you to come under the severities and reproaches of malignant adversaries, on account of your righteous and religious character, as professors of Christ and his gospel, ye are nevertheless exceeding happy in his favour and love under such outward calamities: And ye ought not to be terrified at their threatenings, or at the worst they can do against you; nor be filled with discouragement, consternation and confusion in your own minds, as though they would turn to your real disgrace and ruin.

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you

15. But still keep up high and honourable thoughts of the Lord Jehovah, with a holy reverential fear of him, (Isa. viii. 12, 13.) and with an entire trust in his infinite wisdom, power, mercy and faithfulness for your security, and for ordering all events to your everlasting honour and joy: (Matth. v. 10--12.) And, with this dependence

a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear :

dependence upon him, stand prepared at all times to make your apology (*απολογία*) by word and deed, in defence of your Christian faith and confidence, to every one, who, either in a court of judicature, or in familiar conversation; or with a religious intent for his own or other Christians satisfaction, desires a reasonable account of the grounds of your hopes of salvation according to the gospel, for which ye willingly suffer: And let this be done with a meek and modest air, temper of spirit, and manner of expression; and with a serious gravity and humble reverence of God, and jealousy over yourselves, lest ye offend him by behaving in any way dishonourable to him, by concealing the truth, or saying any thing contrary to it; as also with a cautious fear of offending any persons by speaking disrespectfully to them, whether magistrates or others, who may insist on such an account.

16 Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

16. *Herein exercising yourselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man; (Acts xxiv. 16.) and holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, (1 Tim. iii. 9.)* that can reflect with satisfaction and peace on whatever ye say or do; to the end that, with respect to those things in which your enemies charge and upbraid you, as a mischievous wicked sort of people, who work iniquity, foment sedition, and are injurious to society and the public welfare, they may be effectually confuted, and forced with shame to retract their slanders, who are reproachfully and maliciously traducing (*καταλαλῶντες*) your blameless, humble and benevolent life and conversation, which ye lead to the honour of Christ, through faith in him, and by virtue derived from him.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

17. For it undoubtedly is every way more eligible, honourable and advantageous, and ye will have the nobler support and satisfaction in your own souls, if it please God, in his providence, to permit outward tribulations to befall you, merely on account of your acquitting yourselves well to him, and to your own consciences, in doing what is good and right, and acceptable to him, than they could be, were they to be brought upon you for any crimes or follies of your own, which would add a terrible sting to them, and make them an insupportable burden, that would otherwise have sat easy upon you.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,

18. For, in the case of sufferings without any faults of your own to deserve them, ye are only conformed to the image of your Lord and Saviour; and may well bear

the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

bear them patiently after his example, and for his sake; when ye consider that he, though perfectly holy and righteous, without the least iniquity in heart or life to deserve any ill usage, underwent the most ignominious and agonizing sufferings for the sins of others to expiate them; which he did, not by repeated offerings, like the legal sacrifices, but once for all, as, through the infinite dignity and perfection of his sacrifice, he made complete atonement at once. (Heb. vii. 27. and ix. 26, 28.) He, the just and holy One, suffered all the punishment due to sin in the room and stead of unrighteous and ungodly sinners, that he might reconcile such as we are to God, (Rom. v. 6, 8. 10.) and bring us to a holy communion with him, conformity and obedience to him here; and an everlasting enjoyment of him hereafter; he having been crucified and slain for us in the body of his flesh, which he had assumed into personal union with himself; and which he raised again to an immortal life of blessedness and glory by his own divine power, \* together with the inseparable quickening agency of the holy spirit.

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

19. By which Spirit, as then existing, and acting together with, and from him, he, going in a way of special operation and manifestation to the old world before the flood, preached repentance and reformation, and the righteousness of faith † by the ministry of Noah, by whom he preached to that wicked people, who then lived upon earth, but whose souls are now shut up in the prison of hell, there to abide for ever, for their provoking iniquities. (Matth. v. 25. 26. and 2 Pet. ii. 4. 5.)

20 Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of No-

20. Who formerly disbelieved, rebelled against, and obstinately refused to obey the solemn admonitions, which that preacher of righteousness gave them; and would not attend to, and comply with those strivings of the Spirit with them therein, which, through the patience and long forbearance of God's mercy, were con-

#### N O T E S

\* By the Spirit some understand Christ's divine nature, and others the holy Spirit, the last of which seems to me to be most directly intended, if compared with Gen. vi. 3 which the two following verses here, I think, refer to. However, as I would not positively determine against the former sense, both are included in the paraphrase, that the reader may take his choice.

† Noah may well be supposed to have preached, among other things, the righteousness of faith in the Messiah for justification; since the ark, which he was preparing for the safety of himself and family, was a significant type of salvation by Jesus Christ; and Noah is called a preacher of righteousness, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) and is said to have been an heir of the righteousness of faith (Heb. xi. 7.)

ah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

continued to them for the space of an hundred and twenty years, (Gen. vi. 3.) while Noah, being warned of God, and believing what he had told him about the destruction of that wicked generation, (Heb. xi. 7.) was preparing materials, and putting them together to make the ark, which was likewise a practical sermon to them all along; till the time that the flood came upon them; in which ark, that eminent type of Christ, a very small number of believers, even Noah, his wife, and three sons and their wives, to the amount of eight persons only, escaped the impending destruction from, and were saved out of the water\*, which lifted up the ark upon its surface, while all the rest of that ungodly world were swallowed up in the deluge, as all impenitent and unbelieving sinners will be in the more dreadful floods of divine wrath at the last day.

21 The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

21. Answerable to this temporal salvation in the ark from the flood, by means of the waters bearing it up, we now have salvation in Christ from sin and wrath, by means of the gospel-ordinance of baptism, which in a sense may be called its antitype (*antitypus*): Not that a bare external administration of it, in applying water to the body, as though that were to wash away its defilement, is of any avail of itself for this spiritual purpose; but all its efficacy lies in what is signified by it, as the purification of the heart was by circumcision in the flesh; and as it is a solemn obligation upon conscience to return a suitable answer to its demands of obedience to God, we having been therein devoted to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name, as the one and only true God, we were baptized: (Matth. xxviii. 19.) And we are made partakers of this salvation, and thus restipulate to God, according to our baptismal engagements, through faith in the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as he *was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*; (Rom. iv. 25.) as also for quickening us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness in this world, (Rom. vi. 3---6.) and raising us up soul and body to eternal life in the world to come, that we may live in glory with him.

22. Who

#### N O T E.

\* I am inclined to think, with Mr Pyle, that by water (*ἡ ὕδατος*) may be more naturally understood to mean *from or out of the water*, according to a like sense, in which the preposition (*διὰ*) is to be taken in 1 Cor. iii. 15, which speaks of being saved *so* as by fire. (*διὰ πυρός*) And so it was the ark,

and the safety of those which were in it, and not the water, that prefigured the gospel salvation in Christ, as signified by baptism, by means of which, when the thing signified by it is found in us, through faith in him, we are saved, as the apostle explains it in the next verse.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

22. Who, as the pledge, earnest, evidence and security of it, and as our forerunner, is ascended in his risen body to heaven; and is now enthroned with the most eminent dignity and honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (see the note on Acts vii. 55.) and is invested with all authority in heaven and earth; the good and evil angels of every rank, and all the rulers and potentates of this world, being placed in an absolute subjection to him, that he may order and govern, commission or restrain them, and make them one way or other subserve his own and his Father's glory, and the good of his people, as he is *head over all things to the church*: (Eph. i. 21, 22.)

### RECOLLECTIONS.

When believing wives, like Sarah, Abraham's consort, are clothed with, and more solicitous about the inward ornaments of the never-fading charms of modesty, meekness and humility, from a principle of trust in God, than about the deckings of rich and splendid attire; and when they pay a respectful subjection to their own husbands in all lawful things, how amiable is their character! How acceptable to God, and inviting even to such husbands as disregard his word! And with what honour, humanity, and tenderness, under all their infirmities, should believing husbands treat them, that they may live together as co-heirs of the grace of life, and their prayers may not be hindered!—Personal care as well as relative duties are incumbent on all the disciples of Jesus. They should be as harmonious, as possible, in important sentiments and mutual affection; and should be compassionate, kind, and courteous towards all men; never retaliating injuries, or opprobrious language, but rather wishing all good even to those who use them ill, as knowing that this is a duty to which they are called, in order to their own inheriting a blessing. And O how necessary is it for their present peace and comfort, to refrain from all evil in word and deed, and to pursue the good of others, and the things that make for peace! Who can find in his heart to hurt such an inoffensive, generous and benevolent Christian, or can compass his eternal ruin! There is a natural tendency in his engaging behaviour to make his passage easy through this world; and God himself has a special care of him, to guard him from mischief, and shew him favour; and to hear his cries in distress, and pour confusion upon his enemies. If he suffers for righteousness sake, he need not be terrified at what his persecutors can threaten, or do against him; but should be ready to give an account, with modesty and reverence, of the grounds of his Christian hope, on all proper occasions; and ought to display its happy influence upon him, in constantly maintaining a good conscience and holy conversation, by the grace of God, to the silencing and shaming of all that would invidiously slander him. And O how much better is it to suffer in a good, than in a bad cause! And how cheerfully should believers submit to the greatest hardships, that, by divine permission, may befall them! To animate them hereto, Let them consider that the holy Jesus willingly suffered in his human nature the most terrible death of the cross in their room and stead, to make atonement for their sins, and bring them to God and glory; and that he was raised again by the Divine Spirit, and is now exalted at the Father's right hand in heaven, with full authority over all angels, men and devils, and every rank of creatures, to restrain or employ them as may be most for the security and happiness of his people. And O how great is his salvation which is signified by the ordinance of baptism! But it really belongs only to those, whose hearts, as purified by faith, correspond to the meaning and obligation of that sacred sign, is a sort of antitype to that which Noah and his family had in the ark. Disobedient

dient sinners shall indeed perish, like the ungodly world with whom Christ strove by his Spirit in the warnings that were given them by Noah's ministry with all long-suffering for an hundred and twenty years together, who now, for their impenitence and unbelief, are shut up in an eternal hell, as the most doleful of all prisons: But they who believe in the risen Saviour, be they fewer or more, shall, by virtue derived from him, be raised to a blissful immortality, and dwell with him for ever in heaven. O what a sweet support and comfort are these thoughts to all suffering saints under the heaviest tribulations, which they may be called to endure for his sake!

## C H A P. IV.

*The Apostle improves the consideration of Christian sufferings, for purity and holiness in heart and life, 1—6. and of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, for sobriety, watchfulness, prayer and mutual love, and for a faithful discharge of religious trusts, 7—11. and cautions believers against exposing themselves to punishments for their own faults; but encourages them to rejoice and glory in reproaches and sufferings for Christ, instead of being surprised or dismayed at them; and to commit their souls, in a course of well-doing, to the care of a faithful God, 12—19.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**AS** much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin;

**1. NOW**, to return from the digression about Christ's preaching in the ministry of Noah, &c. (chap. iii. 19—22.) Since the immaculate Jesus has so patiently and extremely suffered in his body for us, who believe in him, that he might expiate our sins, (chap. iii. 18.) and now no longer bears them, as he did before, (chap. ii. 24.) Let this fortify you against impatience and faintings under your trials for his sake, that ye may be arm'd against them by a holy submission and intrepidity of spirit, after his noble and endearing example: For whoever has crucified the old man, the body of sin, or the flesh with its affections and lusts, according to the design, and in virtue of the death of Christ, (Rom. vi. 6. and Gal. v. 24.) \* and has willingly and patiently suffered fiery trials for his sake, and in conformity to him, (ver. 12, 13.) in his mortal body; such a Christian has renounced all his former sinful principles and practices, is crucified to them, utterly disal-

lows

## N O T E.

\* As the flesh is sometimes taken, in a literal sense, for the body; and at others, in a figurative sense, for the corruption of human nature, (see the note on Gal. v. 19. He that has suffered in the

flesh may be considered in either of those views, as in the paraphrase; one or other of which seems more natural to me than any that I have met with.

lows and abhors them, and with full purpose of heart has departed from them ;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

2. That he may no longer go on, as formerly to spend the remainder of his days in the body at an ungodly and immoral rate, in a course of life that is agreeable to the corrupt affections and desires of carnal men ; but in all holy dispositions, designs, and conversation, according to the will and command of God, as may be most for his glory, and well pleasing in his sight.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.

3. For we have too long wasted the precious hours of life already, and ought to think it more than enough, that we have employed them in compliances with the wicked inclinations and practices of our heathen neighbours, to whom we, and especially the Gentile converts amongst us, conformed ourselves ; when in our state of unregeneracy, we indulged, and persisted in wanton dalliances, as expressed by our looks, words, and gestures ; in criminal propensions and pursuits after unlawful embraces ; in immoderate drinking of wine, or other strong liquors ; in gormandizings (*κομῆς*) and riotings ; in luxurious carousings ; and in idolatrous worship, which is not only unlawful and detestable in itself, but also on account of the shameful lewdness, gluttony, drunkenness, and other vices that attended it, particularly among the heathens :

4 Wherein they think it strangest that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you :

4. With respect to which, they wonder what is come to you, that ye have now so unexpectedly forsaken their company, and don't still run along with them into the same dissolute and profuse indulgences to all manner of luxury and intemperance, as ye were wont, and they continue to do with guilty pleasure, and without remorse : And hereupon they vilify you and your religion, as though it has made you the most unsociable, still, precise and humourless creatures, that are not fit for common society, and ought to be the objects of their contempt and scorn.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

5. Who, whatever they think of the matter now, shall most certainly be called to a strict account for all *their ungodly deeds and hard speeches* ; (Jude, ver. 15.) and must answer for them to that great Lord, on whom all their reproaches of you for his sake ultimately fall ; and who has all authority, and will ere long appear, to pass and execute a decisive sentence upon the whole world, even upon all that shall be living on the earth, and that shall be found among the dead and raised again, at the last day, to the joy of the saints and terror of his enemies. (John v. 27...29.)



6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

6. For this is the end for which the gospel was preached to those believers, who are now *the dead in Christ*, (1 Thess. iv. 16.) as well as to those who are still living upon earth, that they, by a divine power attending it, being thoroughly mortified and dead to their former sinful inclinations and courses of life, might be eventually censured and condemned, and even put to death, for their novel and unsociable principles and behaviour, as being judged according to the dictates of corrupt nature, and of mere natural men; but that they might really live after a spiritual and joyful manner, by a holy conformity to the image and will of God in their renewed souls, as being quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and assisted by his Spirit, to do the things that are pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; and might be at last raised up to a glorious and immortal life, *by his Spirit that dwells in them.* (Rom. viii. 11.)

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

7. But consider, for your encouragement and caution under present and future trials, that all the scenes, which lie before you in this world, will soon be over and gone; the Jewish state and nation, temple, city and worship, will quickly come to their final period, according to our blessed Lord's prediction; (Luke xix. 43, 44.) the death of every one of you is near at hand; yea, and in comparison with eternity, the day is drawing on apace, when the earth and all things in it shall be dissolved. (2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.) It therefore greatly behoves you, in this view and prospect, to be wise, sober, and temperate in all things relating to your passions, appetites and enjoyments; and to be constantly upon your watch against temptations, and all the workings of indwelling corruption; and for all assistances of the Spirit, that ye may be in a right frame for prayer, and may readily fall in with all occasional as well as stated seasons of addressing the throne of grace for every needful blessing, and particularly for preservation from sin, and from troubles, or for succour under them, and a sanctified use of them, and deliverance in due time out of them all.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

8. And let it be your governing concern to cultivate a warm, brotherly and cordial affection one towards another, (Rom. xii. 9, 10.) especially in perilous days, as being influenced to it by the superlative love of God in Christ to you: For as he, in the greatness of his love, has freely forgiven and covered all your trespasses, that none of them may be brought into judgement against you; (Eph. iv. 32.) so a sincere and ardent love

in you towards one another for Christ's sake, and in obedience to his command, will inspire you with a forgiving temper toward your brethren, and hide their numerous failings from your own resentment, that ye may kindly overlook, and be careful to conceal them from, instead of exposing them to others. (1 Cor. xiii. 4---7.)

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

9. As another token of love, be ready to exercise all manner of kindness, and to give all seasonable assistances one towards another, and particularly in entertaining religious strangers, who travel abroad for spreading the gospel, or suffer loss for Christ, or are forced to skulk about, through the violence of the times, or are cast among you by any providence; cheerfully receive, and generously relieve such as these, without reluctance, or thinking much at the expence.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10. And as all talents for public offices, as well as private capacities of usefulness in the church, are the free gift of God, let every one, that is favoured with them, be careful to employ them, in proportion to what he has received, for the advantage and edification one of another, as persons entrusted with, and accountable to their great Lord and master for the various gifts and endowments which he has graciously bestowed upon them, that they may manage them with wisdom and faithfulness, like honourable stewards, (*καλοὶ οἰκονομοὶ*) for the good of the church, for which he gave them.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

11. If any one be called to the office of preaching, let him attend to the sacred writings of divine revelation, that he may deliver nothing but what is agreeable to them, and may faithfully declare the mind and will of God, according to them, in such a serious, solemn and reverential, fervent, spiritual and holy manner, as becomes them: If another be called to the office of a deacon, \* to collect, take care of, and distribute the church's stock, for the relief of the poor, the maintenance of the ministry, and defraying the necessary expences of divine ordinances, let him attend to his charge with all fidelity, prudence, tenderness and diligence, according to the ability of body and mind that God has furnished him with, and according to the proportion of

con-

#### N O T E,

\* If any man minister, or deaconize, (*ἐπισκοπεῖν*) seems most immediately to relate to the deacon's office, in distinction from that of public preaching; see the notes on Acts vi. 2, and Rom. xii.

7.) though they also may be extended, one to Christian conference, and the other to charitable contributions in private capacities.

contributions and of the cases committed to his care; to the end that all the temporal as well as spiritual affairs of the church may be conducted in such a manner as shall be most for the glory of God, and the magnifying of his great name, with such thanksgivings and praises from the dispensers and receivers of the benefit, as are acceptable to him, through the mediation, merit and advocacy of Jesus Christ, to whom, and to the Father through him, may all grateful acknowledgements and honours be paid, and universal power, authority and dominion ascribed to the endless ages of eternity! In testimony of our earnest desire and joyful assurance of its being so, let us unanimously join our *Amen*.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

12. My dear suffering brethren, while ye reflect on the imperfection of your present state, and the depravity of mankind, which fills their hearts with enmity to God and godliness, and on our Lord's forewarning you, that in the world ye shall have tribulation, but shall have peace in him, who has overcome the world, (John xvi. 33.) ye ought not to be discouraged or surprised at the severest persecutions that can befall you, which, in allusion to the approaching conflagration of Jerusalem, may be called fiery trials; and which, as they are designed of God, not to destroy, but to refine you, are like a furnace to try the sincerity of, and purify your graces, and purge away your dross, even all your sin. (Is. i. 25. and xxvii. 9. and xlviii. 10.) I entreat you not to be dismayed at them, as though they were unexpected and uncommon things, and foreign to the methods of God's love to his own dear children; and as though ye were dealt hardly with in being called to suffer them.

13 But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

13. But rather reckon upon them, think of them, and stand prepared to meet them, with holy joy; for as much as your Lord and Saviour sympathises with you in all your afflictions, and counts them his own; (Mat. xxv. 40, 45. and Acts ix. 4.) and ye therein are made conformable to his sufferings for you, to the end that when he shall appear in all his glory at the last day, ye may rejoice with exultation and triumph in, and together with him. (Rom. viii. 17. Col. iii. 4. and 2 Tim. ii. 12.)

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory, and of God rest-

14. If ye be upbraided and vilified for your holy profession of Christ's name, and yet take it patiently, and even rejoice in it, this is a blessed token of your union and communion with him, and will, through his merit and grace, turn to your own richest account. For the spirit of God, who, as a divine person, may well

eth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

be stiled *the Spirit of glory*, as the Father and Son are called the Father of glory, and the Lord of glory; (Eph. i. 17. and 1 Cor. ii. 8. see the note there) they all bring undividedly one in nature, as the God of glory; (Pl. xxix. 3. and Acts vii 2.) This glorious Spirit therein eminently bears witness to you, and is evidently present, in a way of gracious and influential abode with you, to support and comfort you under all revilings and sufferings, to carry you with honour through them and bring you off gloriously at the end of them; and to be himself your earnest and pledge of the eternal glory, to which he will conduct you. On the side of your persecuting enemies, Christ and his offices, \* as well as the Spirit and his operations, are blasphemed; (*βλασφημῶνται*) and their reproaches of you aim at, and ultimately fall upon him; for whose sake they are cast upon you: But on your side, honour redounds to his glorious name, by your faith and patience, and by your bravely owning and confessing him in your sufferings, and in your praises.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a back-biter in other mens matters.

15. But let me caution you to take heed, that none of you bring troubles upon himself for any crimes of his own, which deserve, and would justly expose him to them; as for instance, let none of you render himself obnoxious, not only to the anger of God, but to the lash of the civil government, as chargeable with murderous, or with thievish designs and practices; or as guilty of seditious, or any other injurious and unlawful courses; or as an idle pragmatist person, who neglects his own business, and takes upon him to intrude into, and act the part of a busy inspector, (*αλλοτριον εισηλετο*) and governor of the consciences, or secular affairs of other people, that do not belong to him: and to meddle with their concerns, which he has nothing to do with, and has no right to pry into, or interest himself in.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

16. But (3c) if any one bear with a Christian spirit the greatest indignities, reproaches and cruelties, merely on account of his profession of Christ, and doing the duties belonging to it, he has no cause, nor ought he to look upon them as a real disgrace, or as what he need be ashamed of: But, on the contrary, he should esteem them as an honour conferred upon him, which he may well glory in, and glorify God for, with a cheer-

#### N O T E.

\* He is evil spoken of, and he is glorified, may by the construction, refer either to Christ, or to the Spirit, and therefore the paraphrase turns our thoughts to both; though I most incline

to take it as referring to Christ, who frequently speaks of the reproaches, contempt, hatred and persecutions of his disciples for his sake, as levelled against, and terminating upon himself.

cheerful submission to his will, and the disposals of his over-ruling providence, who counts him worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, (Acts v. 41.) and enables him to undergo false imputations, and the sharpest trials, in such a manner, as may be most to the honour and praise of his Lord and Saviour.

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

17. For the time is just now at hand, when not only the temple, God's ancient habitation at Jerusalem, shall be laid waste, in his righteous judgement according to Christ's prediction, (Luke xxi. 6.) but his new testament church, which was typified by that house of God, and in which he dwells in a more spiritual manner, shall begin to be most remarkably visited with trying dispensations of providence for their correction and amendment, though for the elect's sake those days of tribulation shall be shortened: (Mat. xxiv. 9, 21, 22.) And if such severe discipline begin first of all to be exercised on us, who are the habitation of God through the Spirit, (Eph. ii. 22.) even as his judgements of old began at his sanctuary, (Ezek. ix. 6.) what can be expected, but that his wrath should go forth to the utmost extremity against the wicked and ungodly, who, through their obstinacy and unbelief, disregard and reject the gospel of the ever blessed God, as it soon will, in a most dreadful manner, against the whole body of the refractory Jews?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the unner appear?

18. And if, in these perilous times, they who are in a state of favour with God through faith in the righteousness of Christ, and are renewed and sanctified by his Spirit unto holy obedience, shall have a narrow, though sure escape, by the interpositions of divine providence and grace, like persons saved as by fire, (1 Cor. iii. 15.) and like Paul and his company, who scarcely, or with much ado, (*κολιν*) came at the boat for their preservation, (Acts xvii. 16.) \* how dismal must the condition of those impenitent and unbelieving sinners be, who persist in their impieties and iniquities, and are out of favour with God, and fit fuel for his wrath?

F 3  
N O T E.

Where

\* The salvation here spoken of, seems from the whole current of the context to be, mostly at least, of a temporal nature: for the principal design of this chapter is to prepare and fortify believers against the severest sufferings for Christ, and the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the Jewish church and state at the conflagration of Jerusalem, which it is supposed was then within about six or seven years at hand; and, in allusion to which, the

calamities of those days are called fiery trials, and the end of all things is said to be at hand, (ver. vii. 12.) But if we make it refer to a spiritual and eternal salvation, it is to be understood only of the extreme difficulties, troubles, sufferings and apparent dangers, through which the righteous were to pass in their way to heaven, and not of any real hazard, as to the event, with respect to the purpose promise and power of God for accomplishing it.

Where can they find any retreat for safety? Where shall they dare to lift up their guilty heads, or be able to appear? Or where can they expect, and where must they be obliged to appear? Their end must certainly be for ever inexpressibly miserable; there can be no hiding place for them, when God shall come to deal in righteousness with them.

19 Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator.

19. Upon the whole therefore, in reflection upon these awful events, which carry so much encouragement to you as his people, and so much terror to his and your enemies, let them who endure persecutions and afflictions under the over-ruling providence of God, according to his appointment, and who bear them, by the assistance of his spirit, in such a manner as is pleasing to him, commit their lives and souls, and all their concerns, for time and eternity, by faith to him, in a course of holy walking with him, and of doing good to friends and enemies, and to all about them; trusting in him through Jesus Christ, as faithful to his promises of safety and happiness in the worst of times, and as the Almighty Creator and Preserver, who is able to perform them.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How animating is a consideration of the extremity and design of Christ's sufferings to determine us against all compliances with the sensual indulgences of men of carnal minds; and to be conformable to the holy will of God! Do our old companions wonder at, and revile us, for not running any longer, as we were wont, into the same excess of riot with them? Let both parties consider, that every one must give an account of his own behaviour, whether good or bad, to the great judge of all, who will determine in favour of those that are quickened from spiritual death by means of the gospel, which indeed brings them under the censure of men that judge according to the flesh; but leads them into a life of holiness, according to the will of God, by the power of his Spirit. How should the near approach of tribulations and death excite us to sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer, to all exercises of brotherly love and hospitality, and to a faithful improvement, like good stewards of the manifold gifts and talents, in public or private capacities, which God in his free favour has given us, that they may be employed to his glory through Jesus Christ! Let Christians take heed, that they never bring sufferings on themselves, by their own sinful and injurious behaviour; or by prying and intruding like busy-bodies, into other people's affairs, instead of minding their own. But as we, who would cleave unto the Lord, may expect to meet with fiery trials for his sake, we ought not to be surprized, or affrighted at them; but should rather rejoice and glory in them, as an honour put upon us, while we are called and enabled to glorify him, by bearing them in an honourable manner, through the Spirit of glory's resting upon us, and making us conformable to Christ in his sufferings, that we may triumph with exceeding joy, when he shall appear in all his glory, and we shall be glorified together with him. But if the righteous themselves must pass through great tribulations, for their correction and amendment, and God begin first in an awful manner with them, that are his habitation through the Spirit, and they narrowly escape out of imminent dangers, how dreadful must the case of the pinner and ungodly be, who rejects the gospel through unbelief! And where can

can they appear with safety and comfort? Their ruin must be unavoidable and insupportable. As ever therefore we would not perish with them, may we in a way of well-doing, commit our lives and souls by faith, under all afflictions, to the care of that God, who is faithful to his promises, and is able to save his creatures, and to perform all things for them that trust in him.

## C H A P. V.

*The Apostle exhorts and encourages elders to be cheerful, disinterested and humble, in a faithful discharge of their office, 1—4. Directs younger Christians to submit to their elders, yea, all of them one to another: and to yield, with humility and patience, to the band of God, and cast all their care on him, and to be sober, watchful, and steadfast in the faith—against all the temptations of the devil, 5—9. And then prays for their growth and establishment; and concludes with salutations, and a benediction, 10—14.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**T**He elders which are among you exhort, who are also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

**I.** AS to those that are spiritual guides or pastors, chosen out of, and residing in your several churches, and may be called elders, because ministers of mature age and standing, are ordinarily the most proper to be put into that sacred office, I would direct my exhortation to such, and equally bind it upon my own conscience, as being myself not a lord and master\*, but a fellow-elder and servant of Christ, though honoured with the apostolic character: (2 epist. i. 1.) And that they may pay the greater regard to what I am going to urge upon them, let them consider that I was an eye-witness of the bitter agonies and sufferings of Christ in soul and body, (Mark xiv. 33, &c. and 54, &c.) and of their glorious issues in his resurrection from the dead; (Acts iii. 15.) and am now bold to bear my testimony to them, and to their important design, by preaching, and by all manner of sufferings for his sake, and after his example, even at the peril of my life; and as his sufferings turn to my account, so I have an earnest of, and (as I am well assured) shall be admitted to

## N O T E.

\* This way of the apostle Peter's address, saying I exhort or entreat, who am also a fellow-elder, *κατακληρονομία* & *συμπάροικος* is quite different from the high tone of the Pope, who, under pretence of being Peter's successor, and head of the

church, commands with sovereign authority, like a lord, and not a fellow-elder, which all the apostles were with other elders, though every elder was not an apostle.

a blessed communion with him in the glory which he has purchased by his death, and taken possession of, as my head, representative and forerunner; and which will be openly and fully manifested at his second appearing, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (2 Thess. i. 10.)

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

2. Let those of you who are set over the several churches in the Lord, to which ye are related, see to it, that as *pastors after his own heart, ye feed his people with knowledge and understanding,* (Jer. iii. 15.) even his lambs and his sheep, (John xxi. 15, 16.) and that (*ποιμαίνει*) ye exercise a holy discipline, according to his word, in governing the church of God, which he, in his incarnate state, purchased with his own blood, (Acts xx. 28.) and has committed as his flock, to your pastoral care under him, as the chief shepherd: (v. 4.) And the part of good bishops † in personally inspecting their principles, temper and conduct, and in looking after all their spiritual concerns with wisdom and meekness, fidelity watchfulness and care; and let this be done, not by any force upon your inclinations, or by fear of shame among men, in case of neglect, but with freedom and delight as matter of choice; not, like the false teachers, (Tit. i. 11.) with mercenary views to worldly advantages, which are sordid gains, and defiling to the conscience, and to the sacred office of him who makes them his governing end; but with a heart that is ready to engage in this delightful service, purely for the honour of Christ and the good of souls.

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

3. Nor let your important trust be managed with ambitious views of honour to yourselves, or in an imperious, haughty domineering manner, as though ye were lords and masters, that have dominion over the faith and consciences of the people of God's choice, whom, like Israel of old, (Deut. iv. 20. and ix. 29.) he has made his peculiar inheritance, as it were by lot; and who may be considered as the clergy, (*τῶν κληρῶν*) which he has set apart for himself, with a distinction from the rest of mankind: But take care to set a good example

#### N O T E.

† These elders were to bishop it, (*ἐπισκοπεῖν*) or to exercise the office of bishops over the flock; (see the note on Acts xx. 17) which shews that, though they were only ordinary pastors, they were the Christian bishops of the apostolic age, to fulfil all the duties of that office, which is one and the same in those that are spoken of as pastors or elders, who are to feed and govern the flock, which is called God's heritage or clergy,

(ver. 3) as distinguished from pastors; and these officers are at other times described as elders, that are to behave with gravity and prudence, like aged and experienced men; and at others, as bishops, that are to take the oversight of the church: and so all these are only different denominations, taken from such like considerations of the same office, to set out the nature and extent of their charge.



example of humility, self-denial, and all holy conversation and godliness, to the whole company of believers under your charge, that they may be induced to follow your steps. (see 1 Tim. iv. 12.)

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

4. And, for your encouragement hereunto, always bear in mind, that when *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) who has purchased them by his blood, and secures them by his power and grace, under whom ye act, and to whom ye are accountable, shall appear on the throne of his glory to gather all nations before him, and shall set his sheep at his right-hand, and pronounce them the blessed of his Father, &c. (Matth. xxv. 31—34.) Then ye, who are faithful to your trust, shall receive an infinitely better reward, than all the riches of this world, or than the conqueror's withering garland of bays, olive and flowers in the Grecian games. It shall be more durable and flourishing than (*ἀμάρυντος*) a crown made of the flowers of amaranth, which it is said never fade; even an immortal crown of honour and glory, which the Lord will graciously award unto you, as an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, that never fades or abates in worth or lustre. (chap. i. 4.)

5 Likewise ye younger, submit your selves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

5. My exhortation, in like manner, to those of you that are private church-members, consisting mostly of the younger sort of Christians, † as also to inferiors of every character, is, that ye be attentive and submissive to the admonitions, cautions and reproofs of those that are of more advanced years, wisdom, experience and station; and particularly to those that are elders by office, as set over you in the Lord; that ye treat their persons, characters and instructions, as far as they are agreeable to the word of God, with due esteem and reverence: yea, that all of you, in whatever relation ye stand, behave with decency and respect one towards another. Don't be stiff and abounding in your own sense; but hearken to solid arguments and kind reproofs, from whomsoever they come; and yield one

to

#### N O T E.

† Elder and younger are sometimes used to signify persons of *different age*, as in 1 Tim. v. 1. (see the note there) and at others, younger is a denomination of inferiors in distinction from superiors, as in Luke xxii. 26. But at other times, elders is a title of office, the same with bishops or pastors; and that it is to be so understood, ver. 1. is evident from the work, that the apostle exhorts them to in the following verses, which is peculiar to persons of that character; who

also seem to be principally intended by the elder in this verse, which represents the duty of the people toward them, in a beautiful antithesis by the word *likewise*, (*οὕτως*) But the younger, as far as I find, is never used as a term of office; that it is not to be taken in any such sense here, appears from there being nothing said to them that relates to office-work, but only such things as are common to them and all private Christians.

to another, as far as is consistent with your several ranks and situations in the church, and in the natural and civil life: and, to make these duties the more easy and pleasant to you, see that ye be endued with unfeigned humility, and as it were covered all over with it, as a beautiful ornament to add a visible lustre to all your other graces, like a shining upper garment that spreads over all the rest, and hides their defects. And to induce you to cultivate this amiable grace, remember that a haughty spirit is so uncreaturally and unchristian-like, so absolutely unbecoming sinful mortals, and so contrary to your relation to God, and intire dependence upon him, that he sets himself, as it were in battle-array, (*αυτισταθίζει*) against the proud in heart, and has them in the utmost abhorrence; but (*ὁ*) shows favour, and gives a rich increase of all grace, to humble souls, which are his delight. (see Prov. iii. 34. and the paraphrase on James iv. 6.)

6 Humble your  
selves therefore  
under the mighty  
hand of God,  
that he may ex-  
alt you in due  
time;

6. Considering therefore what a great God ye have to do with; how intirely ye are at his disposal, and as nothing before him; how able he is to humble the proud, and exalt the lowly in heart; and what terrible judgements he is about to execute in the way of his providence; as an emblem of much greater still in the world to come, yield yourselves up to his almighty power, and his sovereign and holy will, under all the sufferings and afflictions which he orders for your trial: bow under his rebukes, that he, as a tender father, who has gained his wise and gracious end by his chastenings, may have compassion upon you, and in his time (which is always the fittest) may lift you up above all tribulations, and advance you to a prosperous state in this world, (if that shall be best for you) or, at farthest, to all the honours and delights of the world to come.)

7 Casting all  
your care upon  
him, for he care-  
th for you.

7. But whatever be the distressing burdens, anxieties, solicitude, fears and cares, relating to yourselves, or families and friends, or to the cause and interest of Christ, that perplex, cut and wound your souls, (*παρατίθητε τὰς μέριμνας*) commit them all, in the use of proper means, by faith and prayer, to the Lord, relying on his power and goodness for seasonable relief, for he has all your concerns, spiritual and temporal, at heart, and will sustain you; (Ps. lv. 22.) he will pity, succour, strengthen and comfort you under, and in his time and way will ease you of, and give a happy issue to all your troubles in your eternal salvation.

8. Be sober,  
be vigilant, be-  
cause your adver-

8. Amidst all the difficulties and dangers of your present state of warfare, (*γρηγορεῖτε*) labour to maintain a wake-  
ful,

sary the devil, as a roring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

ful, and sober temper of mind in modest thoughts of yourselves, and in moderating your affections and appetites towards earthly enjoyments; and to be watchful unto prayer, (chap. iv. 7.) and unto the performance of all the duties of your places, and against temptations that would draw you into sin and apostacy; (1 Thess. iii. 5.) because your busy and powerful adversary the devil, that accuser of the brethren, (Rev. xii. 10) like a fierce, savage and hungry lion, greedy of his prey, is indefatigably restless in his contrivances and endeavours, continually going to and fro in the earth, (Job i. 7.) to try how far he may be permitted, by persecutions, frauds, and evil suggestions, to wound, rend and tear, and ruin immortal souls; though, blessed be God, he, being under Christ's controul, cannot compass his design of destroying all whom he would, or of plucking any one of the Redeemer's sheep out of his and his Father's hands (John x. 28, 29.)

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

9. As ever ye would overcome this grand adversary, and all his instruments, make a noble and courageous stand against him, by stedfastly maintaining the pure doctrine of faith and your holy profession of it, in a firm dependence on the power and grace of Christ to vanquish him; it being most of all important for this purpose to take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked: (Eph. vi. 16.) and that ye may not be disheartened in the combat, as though some strange things happened to you, (chap. iv. 12.) remember that the like measure of sufferings, in conformity to Christ, are filled up (*ἐκπληροῦνται*) and finished by your Christian brethren in all parts of the world, during their short abode in it; and as no temptation has taken you, but such as is common to man: so God is faithful, who will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. x. 13.)

10 But the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

10. Now as God, who is rich in mercy, and of his own mere favour is the fountain and giver of all grace, from first to last, suitable to every time of trial, has effectually called us by his word and spirit to an inheritance of eternal glory, which he has promised to, and reserved in heaven for us, and will keep us unto the possession of, (chap. i. 4, 5.) thro' the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ; and as his grace is absolutely necessary to enable you to put my admonitions into practice, it is my earnest prayer, under these encouraging and endearing considerations of him, and in reflection on my own dreadful fall, when, being left to myself, I denied

denied my Lord; (Mark. xv. 68, 70, 71.) that after, and by means of your tribulations, which will soon be over, and are but *light afflictions for a moment*, compared with the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, (1 Cor. iv. 17.) he would perfect all that concerns you, as to knowledge and practice; would establish you immovably in the faith and hope, profession and holiness of the gospel; would *strengthen you with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*; (Col. i. 11.) and would settle your souls, with unshaken peace, safety and comfort, on that foundation which he has laid in Zion. (chap. ii. 6.)

11 To him  
be glory and do-  
minion for e-  
ver and ever.  
Amen.

11. To him, who is the glorious author of all the happiness that we have in hand, or in hope, and reverence, be cheerfully ascribed, as is most due, all possible honour, majesty, might and dominion, through all generations on earth, and to all eternity in heaven, *Amen*; so may it be, and so it shall, as well as ought to be.

12 By Silvan-  
us a faithful  
brother unto  
you, (as I sup-  
pose) I have  
written briefly,  
exhorting, and  
testifying, that  
this is the true  
grace of God  
wherein ye  
stand.

12. Thus I have wrote a short epistle, and sent it to you by *Silvanus*, (see the note on Acts xv. 22.) whom I can recommend as a faithful brother in the work of the Lord (*ὡς λογίζομαι*) as I reckon, upon good grounds, that he is, and will approve himself to be to you: and my design, in what I have wrote, is to exhort and encourage you to abide by the testimony I have herein given for the confirmation of your faith; assuring you that it is the true gospel of the grace of God, relating to salvation alone by Jesus Christ; in the doctrine, belief and profession of which (*ἐν ᾧ*) ye have hitherto stood fast; and by means of which ye still maintain your ground, as I trust ye ever will continue to do, through grace, notwithstanding all the artifices and terrors of your enemies to bring you off from it.

13 The church  
that is at Baby-  
lon elected to-  
gether with you,  
salute thyson, and  
so doth Marcus  
my son.

13. The believers that are gathered into a church-state, and ordinarily assemble for religious worship at \* *Babylon*, where I now am, and that are to be looked upon in a judgement of charity, as choice Christians, and as chosen of God to salvation together with your-  
selves,

#### N O T E.

\* Some suppose that by *Babylon* is meant Rome, which in a figurative sense might be called mystical Babylon, as in Rev. xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. with a view to its future corruption, superstition, idolatry and oppressions under the papacy, when it would be as infamous for all abominations, as the antient Babylon ever was. But Calvin, Piscator, Pareus, Pearson, and many others, think, as I al-

so do, that the apostle could have no reason to conceal Rome under this fictitious name, and that he being the apostle of the circumcision was probably at or near Babylon, either in Chaldaea, or in Egypt, when he wrote this epistle; there being many converted Jews in those parts, See Dr Lightfoot's sermon on this text in his works, vol. 2 p. 114t, &c.)

selves, send their most affectionate and religious respects to you; and so doth John Mark, (Acts xii. 12.) who, at times, has served with me as a son in the work of the gospel, as well as was converted by my ministry, like a son, exceeding dear to me.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

14. See to it that ye cultivate a cordial brotherly love one towards another; in token of which salute each other with a chaste and friendly kiss, according to the custom of Christians in their meetings together. (see the note on Rom. xvi. 16.) May all the blessings of the Lord, for present and everlasting happiness, abound towards all and every one of you, wheresoever ye be scattered, that bear a holy profession of Christ's name, and are supposed to be vitally united to him, as your only head and Saviour! To testify my sincere desire and hope of this, I say *Amen*.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

With what an exemplary spirit, conversation and humbleness of mind, free from haughty airs of lording it over God's heritage; and with what diligence, cheerfulness and disinterested views, should Christian pastors inspect, feed, and govern the churches committed to their ministerial care by the great shepherd of the sheep, who suffered for their redemption! They have the sweetest encouragement to be faithful, in hope of being partakers of, and crowned with glory, when he shall be revealed in all the grandeur of his second appearing. And how dutiful and becoming is it, that humility and respect run through the behaviour of their people to them, of inferiors to superiors, and of all believers, one towards another, in receiving holy admonitions! But especially, how ought every one to behave with an absolute, unreserved, and the lowest submission to the great God under his rebukes! He sets himself against the proud, but shews favour to the humble, and encourages them to cast all their solicitous cares and troubles upon him, who is the almighty God, and has a tender concern for them, and will exalt them in due season. And as the devil is a vigilant, cruel and indefatigable enemy, like a formidable, ravaging and hungry lion, seeking, if possible, to devour them, they ought to be constantly on their watch against him, and against all inordinate affections that would betray them into his hands, and to withstand and reject all his temptations, with a steadfast faith in Christ, to bring them off with victory and triumph over all the persecutions and troubles, which they and their brethren, in all places and ages, are exposed to; but which, comparatively speaking, are light afflictions, and of short continuance, and at furthest can be only during their uncertain residence in this present sinful world. But oh what absolute need is there of help from the God of all grace to fortify our souls against them, and to establish, strengthen, and settle us on Christ, our sure foundation, and perfect his good work in us! What a mercy is it to stand fast in the grace of the gospel! And what high ascriptions of eternal honour and glory are due to the mighty God, for all his greatness and his kindness to us!—Faithful ministers are to be recommended to the churches, and Christian salutations sent to them; all the members of which should express their cordial love, in the best manner, one towards another: And what better demonstration of the sincerity of it can there be, than heartily to wish and pray for peace, inclusive of every blessing to all the chosen of God and members of Christ? May they for ever prosper! Amen.

# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE

## Second Epistle general of PETER.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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### The Preface to the Second Epistle of PETER.

**T**HIS second epistle of the Apostle Peter is most generally supposed to have been wrote in view of his near approaching death, about a year or two after the other, and three or four years before the destruction of Jerusalem, to the same persons, and with much the same design, for their further establishment in faith and holiness, and for their caution against apostacy, by means of the fiery trials that attended them, and were still further coming upon them; and by means of corrupt libertine teachers, and profane scoffers at the promise of Christ's coming to judgement, as though, because it was not already, it never would be brought to pass. (See the preface to the first epistle.)

The divine authority of this second epistle of Peter is well supported, and defended against the chief objection that some have made to it, on account of difference in stile, by Dr Sherlock, now bishop of London, in his first dissertation, annexed to his discourses on prophecy.

The apostle, in connection with the inscription and salutation, represents the comprehensive blessings of the gospel, together with the duties incumbent on those that hope, or pretend to be partakers of them: and proves his testimony to Christ by divine revelation, chap. i. He then warns them of false teachers, that would arise among them in opposition to it, and describes their abominable principles and practices, and the dreadful vengeance that should be taken on them, while the righteous should escape, chap. ii. and shews that, notwithstanding all their perverse cavils against the doctrine of Christ's coming to judgement, of which the conflagration at Jerusalem would be a lively type and emblem, he certainly will come in due season, when the present system of this world shall be intirely dissolved by fire; and a new, refined

refined and glorious fabric shall be erected for the habitation of the saints: in prospect of all which they ought to be holy in heart and life, and progressive in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; concluding with an ascription of glory to him, chap. iii.

C H A P. I.

*The Apostle salutes them who had obtained like precious faith, and reminds them of its attending blessings, 1—4. Exhorts them to add the exercise of various other graces to their faith, and encourages them thereto by the happy issues of their so doing, 5—11. Assures them of his concern to be as assistant as possible, to them therein, before his approaching decease, 12—15. And confirms the truth of the gospel relating to Christ's appearing to judgement, as it may be gathered from an immediate testimony which came from heaven in his own and other's hearing, and more directly proved by the inspired writings of the prophets, 16—21.*

TEXT.

P A R A P H R A S E.

**S** I M O N  
Peter, a  
servant and an  
apostle of Jesus  
Christ, to them  
that have ob-  
tained like pre-  
cious faith with  
us, through the  
righteousness of  
God and our  
Saviour Jesus  
Christ:

**I** who was named Simon at my circumcision, and sur-  
named Peter by our blessed Lord, upon my con-  
version, and confession of faith in him, (John i. 42, and  
Matth. xvi. 18.) who called me to be his ministering ser-  
vant, and honoured me with the apostleship; even I,  
in his name and by his authority, now send this second  
epistle to those Jews of the dispersion, (see the note on  
1 Epist. i. 1.) who by the sovereign disposals of divine  
grace, as it were by lot, (λαχυσί) are made partakers of  
the faith of God's elect, (1 Epist. i. 2, compared with  
Tit. i. 1.) which, though various in degrees, is of the  
same excellent nature and kind, as to its causes, acts  
and objects, fruits and benefits, and is of like great price  
in the sight of God, with that true and unfeigned faith,  
which we the apostles, who have made known unto you  
the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (ver.  
16.) and which all of us, who believe to the saving of  
our souls, have obtained, not through any worthiness or  
ability of our own, but through the merit of that ever-  
lasting righteousness, which was wrought out, and  
brought in, by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus  
Christ \*, who is a divine person and the only mediator

as

N O T E.

\* Through the righteousness of God  
and our Saviour Jesus Christ (εὐδικαιοσύνη  
τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμεῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ) may be  
literally rendered in the righteousness of  
our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and  
so is to be understood as descriptive of

one and the same person, the article in  
the Greek being prefixed only to the  
first of these titles; (see the note on Eph.  
i. 1.) but in the next verse no article is  
prefixed to either of them. Accord-  
ingly the righteousness here intended is  
the

as being both our God and Saviour, who purchased all blessings for us, and on whose behalf it is given unto us to believe on him. (Phil. i. 29.)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2. May all the blessings of grace and peace, of free favour and clear discoveries of it, as the fountain, and prosperity of every kind, as its effect, abound with the richest variety and fulness to all and every one of you, through a believing, experimental and increasing acquaintance with God, as your reconciled and covenant-God and Father in Christ; as also with Jesus himself, and with what he has done, is doing, and will do, as the common Lord and Saviour of every one of us, who believe in him.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

3. I heartily desire that ye may, and trust that ye shall, be thus abundantly blessed, since Jesus Christ our Lord, (ver. 2.) in the greatness of his power, which is truly divine, has already \* in his free favour bestowed on us all the blessings that he sees best for us, relating to the present life, and especially all that are requisite, for maintaining and improving our spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal, and for every exercise of grace in all acts of piety toward God, till it be compleated in glory, through the efficacious knowledge and faithful acknowledgement (*δια τῆς ἐκγνωσεως*) of him; and of the Father through him, who has called us by the gospel to an inheritance of eternal glory, and to a courageous profession of our faith in hope of that inheritance †; and has effectually called us to this by a glorious operation of his mighty power in us.

4. By

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the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, which is often styled *the righteousness of God*. (See the note on Rom. i. 17.) But if any would understand the word God to be in this place meant of God the Father, in distinction from our Saviour Jesus Christ, it is nevertheless to be taken for *the righteousness of Christ*; because, according to our translation, it is *the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. And what can this be, through which precious faith is obtained, but that righteousness of Christ which God has accepted, by which his justice is satisfied, and for the sake of which, he gives faith in it unto justification of life? And were we to render the words (*ἐν δικαιοσυρᾷ*) in the *righteousness* of God and our Saviour, they point us to the righteousness of Christ, as the object of faith, or that, in which

we believe unto righteousness, Rom. x. 10. but as believing in the object of faith is ordinarily expressed by another preposition (*σε*) and never, as far as I find, by this, (*ἐν*) I rather chuse to consider this as signifying by or through, (*ex pro* *δια*) as it frequently doth in other places.

\* The participle, (*ἐπιστῶντες*) here rendered given, may be considered as of the middle voice, which admits of a contraction in the active, as well as passive mood, and takes off the grammatical difficulty of this sentence.

† To glory and virtue (*δια δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς*) is most strictly speaking, as the margin has it *by glory and virtue*; and may signify the glorious power by which we are called to eternal glory, as the end, and to Christian fortitude as the means of attaining it.



4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue know-

4. By which divine persons \* (ver. 2.) and the glorious operations of their power, by means of the gospel, are given to us the best of promises, which are eminently great, far beyond our utmost conceptions, and much more beyond all our desires; and they are exceedingly prized by true believers, and every way valuable, grand and noble (*τιμιὰ*) in themselves, as they are intirely free and everlasting promises, ordered in all things and sure; and as they contain the inestimable blessings of life and godliness, pardon and peace, grace and glory, and are admirably suited to every exigence; (*ὥστε*) to the end that by an application and fulfilment of these promises, in all their variety, riches, and extent, ye might have such communion with God (*κοινωνίαν*) in his holiness, which, on account of its resemblance of him, derivation from him, tendency toward him, and complacency in him, may be called a divine nature; † ye having, as an introduction to it, and as a part and evidence of it, renounced and fled away, with vigour and abhorrence, (*ἀπεστυγνύσας*) from all the corrupt principles and practices, that spread and prevail among the men of this world; through the power of their depraved inclinations, and inordinate affections to carnal things.

5. And for this reason, (*αὐτοῦ τούτου*) or in consideration of what ye are already partakers of, ye ought to use the utmost care and diligence for a progression in every grace and duty; as for instance, in humble dependence on divine power and promised assistances, (ver. 3, 4.) add to your precious faith a noble Christian-courage,

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\* Whereby (*δι' ὧν*) is plural, and refers either to glory and virtue, mentioned at the close of the preceding verse, or to God, and Jesus our Lord at the close of ver. 2; and so may be rendered either by which, or by whom. If we refer it to glory and virtue, the meaning may be, that these promises are given to believers by that glorious energy or excellent glory, and efficacious power that attend the gospel: Or if we render it, by whom, and refer it to God and Jesus our Lord, it may intimate that these promises are given to us, both by God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, as the promise of the Spirit was, John xiv. 15. 26. and xvi. 7. and Acts i. 4. But were we to follow the reading of Stephanus, and one or two others of less note, which puts it in the singular number (*δι' ἧς*) it may refer either to God, or to Jesus our Lord, as the antecedent mean-

tioned ver. 2. the nearest of which is Jesus our Lord, whom for that reason I take to be intended in ver. 3. according to the paraphrase upon it.

† The divine nature (*θεῖα φύσις*) might have been much better rendered a divine nature, the expression in the Greek, being without the article, most naturally carries this sense; and that divine nature, which we are said to be partakers of, is not by a participation of the divine essence, which is incommunicable to any creature; nor is it by a personal union with the divine nature, as the human nature of Christ is; but it is by a divine impression of God's own holy image upon us, or by a holy principle infused into us, which introduces a contrary form to that which we had before by the corruption that is in the world through lust.

in its profession and defence; and to your Christian courage, add still further advances in spiritual understanding, wisdom and prudence.

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

6. And to this sort of excellent knowledge, add a due regulation and government of your passions and appetites, with a weanedness of heart from the alluring objects of flesh and sense; and to the moderation of your affections to earthly things, add patience under all tribulations, with a meek and quiet spirit, and an intire resignation to the will of your heavenly Father; and to your Christian patience, add all exercises of piety and devotions in a holy reverence of God, and conscientious attention to every ordinance of divine worship, and all religious duties, according to his word, from a principle of love to him, in obedience to his command, and for his glory.

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.

7. And to your religion toward God, add an affectionate love, tenderness, sympathy and compassion, with every suitable fruit and expression of them, toward your fellow Christians, as brethren in the Lord; and to this brotherly kindness, and an universal benevolence to all mankind, as partakers of the same human nature with yourselves, endeavouring to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare, whether they be friends or enemies: (See Gal. vi. 10.) these are things of great importance, and will turn to the best account.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8. For if these excellent graces be found in you, and be lively and enlarged in their exercise, they will make you thriving Christians; so that ye will neither be slothful nor inactive (*ἀργον*) in the concerns of your souls, and in the duties of your Christian profession; nor useless and unprofitable, and, like barren trees, destitute of holy fruits, suitable to the nature of your fiducial knowledge and acknowledgement of Christ, as our only Lord and Saviour; which will make you vigorous, diligent and abounding in every good word and work, relating to God, yourselves and others.

9 But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

9. But whatever professor of Christianity he be that is destitute of the forementioned graces, or so remarkably deficient in them, as to have no experience of their exercise, like what is sensibly present to him, (*οὐκ ἔχει*) let his pretences to light and knowledge be ever so great, he is still in spiritual darkness, like a blind man, or like one who winks hard, and shuts his eyes against the light; or at most (*μικρὸν*) he has only a glimmering, confused and short sight, which cannot discover distant objects, nor penetrate into the beauty and glory of

of gospel-truths, or of Christ and holiness : nor plainly discern the reality and importance of future things, which are as far out of his view, as if he were purblind, though they are made manifest in the word of God, and in the light of faith : and will soon be present in all the misery or happiness of the eternal world : and he has thrown off a sense of the obligations, end, and design of his solemn profession, as signified by his baptism, of being purified from the sins he formerly indulged ; and is careless and unconcerned about being cleansed by the blood and spirit of Christ from the iniquities, which for a great while, even from his birth, had reigned over him. (Isa. xlviii. 8.)

13 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure : for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall :

10. Considering therefore the wide difference there is between real and nominal Christians, and how many take up with the name, without the thing, let it excite you, my dear brethren, to be the more earnestly careful, in the use of all means of grace, to obtain a full assurance, in the light of the spirit, of your effectual calling, and thereby of your having been eternally chosen of God to salvation ! since your election cannot be known but by its fruits in your calling, which are the first evidence of it, \* and from which it may certainly be concluded. See to it then, that this be a firm and settled point with you, by its being manifested in such holy effects, as will be a genuine and undoubted proof of it : for if ye live in the exercise of the graces but now specified, (ver. 5—7.) whatever trials, slips and infirmities may attend you, ye shall never stumble so as to fall off from Christ, or apostatize from your faith in him and holy profession of his name ; nor ever fall into error or sin to your perdition, or fall short of eternal life.

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11. For

## N O T E .

\* The scripture usually speaks of election and calling in their proper order, as the first was from eternity, and the other is in time : one the cause and the other the fruit or effect, according to the account given of them in Rom. viii. 29. 30. Eph. i. 3—7. and 2 Thes. ii. 13. 14. But here the apostle inverts the order, and puts our calling first, because his immediate design in this passage was not so much to discourse of the things themselves, as of our knowledge of them, and assurance concerning our own interest in them ; and this knowledge can be obtained only in this order, by ascending from the effect to the cause, from our calling to our election ; and proving this by that : For the election of one

or another particular person is an intire secret in the heart of God, till it breaks forth, and is made known by its effects. And therefore it is a vain, fruitless, unwarrantable and preposterous attempt, for any persons to puzzle themselves about their own election, before they are effectually called, or have evidence in themselves that they are so. But if their effectual calling be clearly made out, they may certainly conclude from thence that they were elected ; since all, and none but the elect are so called : For otherwise their being called could not be a sure proof, that they were elected, which is the very point in the apostle's view.

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

11. For while in this way and manner of making out your election by your effectual calling, ye add (*εισχορηγῶντες*) to your faith virtue, &c. (ver. 5.) ye shall not only get safe to heaven, but shall have an abundant increase of hope and joy in your way to it; and, when ye come to die, a triumphant entrance shall be richly supplied and added to you (*πλῆθος εισχορηγήσεται*) into all the sublime dignity, affluence and delights of the eternal kingdom of our great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he has purchased and taken possession of for us, who are interested in him, and whom he will receive to himself, that where he is, there we may be also. (John. xiv. 3.)

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

12. As these are things of the greatest consequence, I therefore cannot be unconcerned about reminding you of them; and pressing them upon you, once and again, in order to your being suitably affected with them, and putting them into practice; though I am well satisfied that ye are already acquainted with them, and confirmed in a belief of the truth of the gospel, according to the present dispensation of it; and particularly of the truth, which I am now recommending to you about the necessity of universal holiness, in order to your joyful entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and which, in this day of trial and affliction, eminently calls for a present attention to it.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance;

13. Yea, so great is its importance, and so nearly are ye concerned in it, that I count it fit and proper, and (*δεκτικόν*) a piece of justice to truth and you, as long as I continue in the body, (which is like a moveable tent, set up for a little time, and soon to be taken down again) not barely to inform you of these things, which ye may have little or no need of; but earnestly to excite you to consider and practise them, by repeatedly reminding you of them, lest at any time, through the treachery of your memories, and the heedlessness of your spirits, ye let them slip and make no proper use of them.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

14. This I am the more desirous to do while opportunity lasts, as being well assured, that the earthly house of this tabernacle will quickly be dissolved, when I must quit my abode in it, even as our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has manifested to me, that the time is now at hand, when I must seal my testimony to him, according to his former intimation about the manner of death, by which in old age I should glorify God. (John xxi. 18, 19.)

15. And

15 Moreover I will endeavour, that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

15. And as I am very solicitous for your being established in, and deeply possessed of these interesting truths, not merely during my continuance in the body : so I shall make it my study and labour, for the little time I have to live, to inculcate them upon you, as I have done by committing them to writing in my former epistle, and now do in this, that ye may ever retain a remembrance and lively sense of them, after I am dead and gone to a better world, by a departure (1<sup>st</sup> Cor.) of my soul from the body, and from all the sins and sorrows of time, to a perfectly holy and blessed eternity.

16. For we, the apostles of Christ, who publish the gospel of the grace of God, have not therein devised sophistical and idle tales of our own heads, like the traditional fabulous stories that abound among Jews and Gentiles ; nor have we, like them, propagated vain conceits, by artful and cunning methods of deceiving, when we declared unto you in preaching, as I also have done in writing, (1 Epist. i. 13. and iv. 5.) the things that relate to the divine authority, power and glory, with which our Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the world at the last day ; but several of us, James and John together with myself, were present at his transfiguration on the mount, which was a lively emblem and prefiguration of his final glorious appearing ; and were eye witnesses of the illustrious majesty and grandeur, in which he then shone, like himself, as with the meridian brightness of the sun ; and was eminently owned of his heavenly Father. (See the note on Matth. xvii. 2.)

17. For, at that very time, he received an honourable and glorious testimony from God the Father himself, which put the highest dignity upon his character, as his proper Son and the true Messiah, when an audible articulate voice was directed immediately to him from the Shechinah, which then appeared as a magnificent symbol of the divine presence, (See the notes on Matth. xvii. 5. and Luke. ix. 26.) and from which God the Father, who is infinitely glorious in himself, and dwells in the inaccessible light and glory of the upper world, distinctly pronounced these words, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, that is, *This Jesus is by way of eminence my most dearly beloved eternal Son, in whose person and office, undertakings and performances, I am exceedingly delighted, as I also am with all those that are found in him by vital union with him ; and so clothed with his righteousness, and washed from their sins in his blood.*

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

18. And this voice, in which these remarkable words were uttered immediately by the God of heaven, from the cloud of glory in the region of the air, all of us then present distinctly heard with a clear understanding of its import, when we attended our glorious Lord at the very time of his transfiguration on Mount Tabor, which was sanctified or made relatively holy, for the time being, by the divine presence; as Mount Horeb was when the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush that burned, and was not consumed. (Exod. iii. 4-5.)

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:

19. And beside this attestation to our blessed Lord, which may well be considered as an emblematical and presumptive notification of his future appearing with divine power and majesty, (ver. 16.) \* We have a still more direct proof of it, as it may be more assuredly gathered from the express declarations even of the Old Testament, (ver. 20. 21.) which are confirmed in the New, (See Ps. xvi. 13. Dan. vii. 13. 14. Matth. xiii. 40-43. and xvi. 27. and xxv. 31-46. and xxvi. 64. John v. 28. 29. Acts i. 11. and xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Thess. i. 10. 2 Thess. i. 7-10. 2 Tim. iv. 1. and 1 Pet. i. 9-13) unto which testimony of inspired prophecy, relating to this very point, ye ought carefully to attend, so as to be guided and determined by it, as a light that, like a lamp in a dark place, shines amidst

#### N O T E.

\* We have a more sure word of prophecy is not to be understood, as though the word of prophecy were in itself more certain than the glorious attestation which was given to Christ from heaven in the sight and hearing of the apostles; or as though this, as far as it went and was reported by the apostles, were not to be as fully credited as that. But it was a more certain and indisputable proof of Christ's second appearing with power and great glory, than could be gathered from what passed in the mount, according to the ingenious and judicious sense, in which Dr Sherlock, now bishop of London, has taken it, in his discourse on prophecy, page 20-22. where he observes, "that the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only point here in question: and so it is, as though the apostle should say, it is a great presumption that Christ shall come in glory: that we have already seen him glorified; and it is a further evidence of his power to deliver his servants, since God has openly declared him

to be his well-beloved Son. But to assure us that he will indeed so come, and so use his power, we have a more sure word of prophecy: i. e. we have the very word of God, (speaking by his prophets) to whom all futurity is known, to assure us of the certainty of this future event. But Gherard supposes that the comparative, surer, may be here used for the positive degree, sure, as in the Greek of Acts xvii. 21: Or rather he, Beza and Piscator take the comparative to be put for the superlative degree, as in the Greek of Acts xxv. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. and xv. 19. and so no comparison may be here designed, but only a strong assertion of the certainty or firmness of the prophetic testimony. See also Glasson's philologia sacra, page 428. where he gives several other instances of the comparative being put for the superlative degree, as particularly in Matth. xi. 11. xviii. 1. and xiii. 32. and tells us that some refer 2 Pet. i. 19. to this change of the degrees of comparison.

amidst the darkness of Judaism and Heathenism, and of all carnal hearts; and *the darkness comprehends it not*, (John. i. 5.) It is your duty and interest to study, and build your faith upon this till the day of Christ's glorious appearing shall begin to break: and till he, as *the Sun of Righteousness, the day-star from on high, and the bright and morning star*, (Malach. iv. 2. Luke i. 78. and Rev. xxii. 16.) shall arise in full lustre, and shed such a transcendent light in your souls, as shall intirely dissipate all obscurity, or doubt about what was intimated by the vision on the Mount, and is further confirmed by the sure word of prophecy.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

20. In the mean while, ye may confidently depend upon the prophetic testimony to Christ's future glorious appearing, as being, first of all, well satisfied, that no prophecy contained in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and confirmed by the New, is the product of any man's own invention, according to his private fancy, opinion, or judgement about it, the meaning of which the antient prophets themselves often did not thoroughly understand. (1 Pet. i. 10. 11.)

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost.

21. For none of those prophecies were delivered, and committed to writing in former times, by the contrivance, will and pleasure of the prophets, according to what they, as men, thought might be for the best: But those sacred penmen, whom God sanctified for himself, and for his service, spake and wrote only such things therein, as were suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, whose immediate dictate excited them to utter the ideas which he raised in their minds, and to express them in words that should convey the true sense of them, according to the further explication, which he has now given of them in New Testament light.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

It is honour enough for any gospel-minister to be, what the apostles counted themselves, the servants of Jesus Christ; and they, who are truly such, cannot but heartily wish, that grace and peace, inclusive of every blessing, may be multiplied to all that have obtained like precious faith with themselves, through the infinite merit of the righteousness of God their Saviour, and through the knowledge of him, who has effectually called them by the gospel to a glorious inheritance, and to a free and holy profession of their faith and hope, till they enter with triumph into his everlasting kingdom. How precious are the promises, by which believers are made partakers of a divine nature, in a holy conformity to God, and departure from all the wickedness of this world, that proceeds from the corruption of men's own hearts; But O, of how great concern is it, to give all diligence, by divine assistance, to add to our faith every Christian grace and lively exercise of it! This will make and prove us to be active believers, whose knowledge of our Lord and Saviour is not a lifeless notion, but will produce substantial and assuring evidences of our effectual calling, and consequently of our election, from whence it flows; and will be the means of preserving us from

from utter apostacy and falling short of heaven. But he, who is destitute of all this, is still wandering in the dark, and has forgot his profession of being purified from his former sins. What need therefore have gospel-professors of being often put in mind of these important things, though they already know them! And what care should Christ's ministering servants take to repeat them on all occasions, that they may be remembered and practised when they are dead, and gone to heaven; especially considering, that their souls must soon depart from their bodies, which are the frail tabernacles of their present abode! And with what confidence may they recommend and inculcate such things as are founded on the testimony of God himself by his apostles and holy prophets, relating to Christ, whom he declared, with an audible voice from the excellent glory on the mount, to be his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and relating to the divine majesty and power with which he will gloriously appear at his coming to judge the world! These are not cunningly devised fables, but unquestionable truths, as contained in the infallible word of God, which was wrote, not according to the private will and fancy of men, but by the inspiration of his Spirit; and ought to be attended to as a light, which he has given to guide us through all our darkness in this world, till, by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon our souls, we arrive at the unclouded light and glory of the world to come. O may the blessed author of the holy scriptures lead us into the knowledge of his mind and will in them, and make us wise to our own salvation!

## C H A P. II.

*The Apostle cautions believers against false teachers, whom he describes by their pernicious principles and influence, 1—3. Shews the certainty of their punishment, from the examples of the fallen angels, of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, which the godly shall escape, as Lot did out of Sodom, 4—9. And gives a black account at large of these seducers, as they were aggravatedly wicked under high pretences to liberty and purity, 10—22.*

### TEXT.

### PARAPHRASE.

**B**UT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1. **B**UT as there were true and holy prophets of the Lord, who (as has been observed, chap. i. 21.) wrote under the inspiration of his Spirit, and are to be attended to, so there were likewise false pretenders to this character, who rose up in former times among the people of Israel to seduce them, and were to be guarded against; and this is the case under the gospel-state, according to the predictions of our Lord and his inspired apostles. (Math. xxiv. 11. Acts xx. 30. 1 Cor. xi. 19. and 1 Tim. iv. 1.) There are and will be false teachers rising up among you of the Jewish nation, who, under various pretences, will covertly and craftily introduce the most pernicious heretical tenets, which tend to the eternal destruction of those that broach, and those



those that receive them, as they both doctrinally and practically, renounce the wisdom, authority, grace and holiness of their Lord and Master, as discovered in the gospel-revelation of him, whom they boast of, as the God that redeemed or delivered them out of Egypt with a mighty hand †, and has through a succession of many ages signally owned as his professing people, and wrought many temporal salvations for; and so, by acting the most ungrateful, abominable and self-condemning part, they constructively deny him, and pull down speedy and utter destruction upon their own guilty heads, which may overtake them before they are aware. (1 Thess. v. 3.)

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

2. And such is the natural depravity of mankind, and the enmity of their carnal hearts against God and godliness, that many professors of Christ's name, who have not the grace of God in truth, will be seduced into their destructions, (αἰσχρολογία) and follow their detestable example in licentious principles and practices, on account of which the truth of the gospel, and the way of holiness and happiness according to it, (βλασφημία) will be blasphemously spoken of by its enemies.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lieth not, and their damnation lieth not.

3. And, from covetous reaches after worldly gain, these seducers will use abundance of deceitful flattering speeches, which have no truth or sincerity in them, and are only a cover of their base designs to make a prey of you, that they may get some secular advantage by you, as merchants do by their traffic: But theirs is a dreadful merchandise, whose righteous condemnation has been of old determined of God, (Jude ver. 4. see the note there) to be executed for their flagrant iniquities, in due season, without delay; and whose everlasting destruction hastens apace, and will certainly come

#### N O T E,

† The Lord that bought them may, with the greatest propriety, be here understood of God, as the providential governor and deliverer of Israel: For the word (ἱστορίαι) here render'd the Lord, is applied to God when spoken of by way of distinction from our Lord Jesus in that parallel place Jude ver. 4 and is several times used in other parts of the New Testament with a reference to the Father; but, as far as I find, never to the Son: And his having bought them, seems to relate to the temporal deliverances he had wrought for Israel, as his professing people, with a reference to Deut. xxxii. 6, where, speaking of them as his visible church, it is said, *is not he thy Father that has bought thee?* And, in the

passage before us, there is no intimation of the death of Christ, or of redemption by his blood, as there usually is when redemption by price is intended.—Or if it be supposed to relate to the purchase which Christ made of these persons, that they might be eternally saved, it must be understood only according to the judgement of charity, during their former credible profession of his name: Or his having bought them may only signify his having purchased a dominion over them in such a manner as may best answer the ends of his kingdom which rules over all; he being Lord of the quick and the dead, good and bad, and his universal Lordship being founded on redemption by his blood.

come upon them with a vengeance, (Deut. xxxii. 34. 35.) as may be concluded from the course of God's dealings with former transgressors.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement;

4. For if (as we well know) God in his awful justice did not shew any favour, or abate the punishment due to that higher rank of originally more excellent creatures, the angels themselves, who, through pride and envy, transgressed the law which God had given them for the trial of their obedience, by swerving from its precepts; but for their first sin hurled them all down with righteous indignation from their blissful, honourable and holy habitation in heaven, (Jude ver. 6.) into some unknown place of misery, which is called the *deep* and the *bottomless pit*; (Luke viii. 31. and Rev. ix. 1. 2. and xi. 7.) and committed them, like condemned criminals, to safe custody, as though bound with the strongest chains in a dungeon of darkness, horror and despair, to be secured for full torment against the general judgement of the great day.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

5. And if the holy God had no pity on the wicked generation of men of the same common nature with ourselves in the antediluvian age of the world, that despised and disregarded all his solemn and gracious warnings with great long-suffering and patience; but if, while he saved Noah, who was the eighth at the head of them that were preserved in the ark, (1 Pet. iii. 20.) and was by divine commission a faithful preacher of moral righteousness, repentance and reformation, and of the righteousness which is by faith, of which he himself was an heir, (Heb. xi. 7.) and a preacher of the righteous judgements of God, which would destroy that impenitent, unbelieving and disobedient world; If God, I say, at the appointed season, swallowed up the whole of that perverse set of people in the universal deluge of water which drowned them, one and all, how great soever their numbers were:

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, mak-

6. And if in like terrible righteousness, and executed by a contrary element, he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, together with Admah and Zeboim, (Gen. xix. 24, 25. and Deut. xxix. 23.) to the utter subversion of those cities, reducing them, with all their profligate inhabitants, to ashes

#### N O T E.

\* Noah was the tenth from Adam, as appears by the genealogy in Luke iii. 36—38. and therefore the eighth person cannot mean the eighth from him, but the eighth of them, or the head of the eight, that were saved in the ark, which were his wife, and his three sons and

their wives, together with himself, for whose sake they were preserved Gen. v. 8 to compared with chap. vii. 7. And therefore the apostle might particularly mention him as the eighth. (See also the note on 1 Pet. iii. 20.)

ing them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;

ashes in the most dreadful catastrophe, (*καταστροφή*) to which he justly condemned them for their abominable wickedness; and so set them forth as an example of his indignation and wrath, as a type or pattern (*τύπος*) of the final conflagration and eternal fire which shall consume all the wicked of the earth, (Jude ver. 7.) that it might be a warning to all resolute sinners of succeeding ages, who persist in their iniquities, and cast off his fear; and might shew them what they must expect at his hand:

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

7. And if, in the midst of all the flaming desolation of Sodom and Gomorrah, the gracious God put a special mark of kind distinction upon his righteous servant Lot, whom he plucked as a brand out of the fire; and so (*ἔρρυεντο*) with a sort of merciful violence rescued him from it, (Gen. xix. 16.) who had been sorely grieved, fatigued and oppressed in his own pious soul at the vile, dissolute, lascivious, obscene and unnatural behaviour of that perverse and wicked people.

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds)

8. (For this holy, just and good man, who dwelt among them, and daily saw and heard what shocking crimes were openly committed in the course of their flagitious lives, exceedingly laid them to heart, and with the bitterest anguish (*ἀσθενείῃ*) even tormented his holy soul in mournful reflections on their abominably filthy and unjust actions, which were contrary to all the laws of God and nature.)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished:

9. As certainly as these are all undoubted facts, we may from thence with equal certainty conclude, to the joy of the saints, and the terror of the wicked, that, be the corruptions of the age ever so great, and the snares, troubles and dangers of his people ever so many, the great Lord of heaven and earth, whose understanding is infinite, and power uncontrollable, and whose kingdom rules over all, perfectly knows at what time, in what manner, and by what means, to extricate those out of all their trials and afflictions, who like Noah and Lot are religious worshippers of him: and he will assuredly do it in his love and faithfulness to them: and he equally knows how to hold the wicked and ungodly in safe custody, like the fallen angels, (ver. 4.) under his supreme dominion, till he shall bring them forth, as condemned criminals, in the day of the final judgement, to be punished according to the iniquity of their hearts and lives.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in

10. But especially he knows how to reserve, and will severely deal with those impious seducers, (ver. 1.) who, answerable to their corrupt principles, live according

the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

ing to the carnal dictates and desires of their sensual minds, indulging themselves, and going on without restraint, in a gratification of their impure and lascivious inclinations, and Sodomitical practices; (Jude ver. 78.) and who insolently pour contempt upon all regular government and authority over them, that would put a check upon their vices: They are a daring, refractory, disobedient and headstrong sort of people, ever seeking to please themselves, and have no law to govern them but their own will; nor do they scruple or fear to speak reproachfully, not only of the apostles and ministers of Christ †, but of civil magistrates that are advanced to high dignity, and worthy of honour, as they are set over them, and are the ordinance of God to regulate and controul their exorbitant passions, appetites and manners.

11. Whereas angels which are greater in power and might bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

11. They herein act a very contrary part to the holy angels that *excel in strength, and do the commandments of God, hearkening to the voice of his word*, (Ps. ciii. 20.) and are superior in dignity and might to these vain boasters, or to any earthly potentates; and yet they, considering civil magistrates as the ordinance of God for good, (see the notes on Rom. xiii. 1—4.) have such a reverence of him, and are so generous and benevolent to them, as not to revile their persons and government, or bring a slanderous censure upon them (*βλασφημοῦντες αὐτοὺς*) in the presence of God: Nay, even *Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil himself, used no opprobrious bitter language against him*, (Jude, ver. 9.)

12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they un-

12. But these presumptuous despisers of government, (ver. 10.) instead of imitating the good angels in the decorum of their conduct, are irrational, furious and brutish in following their own sensual inclinations, like beasts of prey that are void of understanding, and naturally inclined to rapine and destruction, and are made to

#### N O T E.

† *Despising government, and speaking evil of dignities*, some think refers to the vile notions that the Nicholaitans, and the Gnostics after them, vented about angelical powers, and that the apostle, in the next verse, refers to the good angels not bringing a railing accusation against the apostate spirits, which I have there glanced at, by pointing to what the apostle Jude says (ver. 9.) about the arch-angel's not bringing a railing accusation against the devil; though that seems to be an additional thought, and

not the same with our apostle's; and it appears most natural to me to understand him in this verse, as describing persons, whoever they were, that despised civil government, and spoke evil of earthly dignities; in opposition to which, he, in the next verse, alledges the contrary conduct of the good angels that *bring no railing accusation against them*, with whom he may possibly include ecclesiastical rulers. (See the note on Jude ver. 8.)

derstand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

12 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time: spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices, cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bazar, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

to be taken and destroyed by men, for whose use they were originally created: These act at such a monstrous rate, as to reproach and tail against persons and things, both of a civil and religious nature, whose use and excellence they neither know, nor approve of; and they shall be utterly destroyed for, and by means of, the indulged corruptions of their own minds and manners.

13. And they shall reap the bitter fruit and wages which are justly due to all their complicated wickedness, as those that glory and take delight in voluptuous and vicious courses, which they impudently pursue in open day-light, instead of being ashamed of them as *works of darkness*, which people, that have the least grain of modesty left, dare venture to practise only in the night: (1 Thess. v. 7.) They are a reproach and scandal to the Christian name, gratifying their luxurious inclinations with their own deceived and deceiving devices, whereby they cunningly insinuate themselves into your favourable opinion of them, and please themselves with their having cheated and imposed upon you, while, under pretences of love and friendship, they socially partake in ordinary or religious feasts with you. (Jude ver. 12. see the note there.)

14. Their eyes are continually and insatiably employed in wanton adulterous glances, to discover their own lewd inclinations, and excite the like in others, and to find out proper objects for inflaming and gratifying the vilest affections; and so propense are they to all iniquity, that they know not how to refrain from contriving to commit it, or endeavouring to draw others into it; and so, by their inticements in word and deed, they ensnare and catch poor unguarded souls, that are not established in the truth and holiness of the gospel, nor fortified with grace against their guileful arts. Their hearts are entirely engaged in contrivances how to compass their covetous desires after the riches, honours, and defiling pleasures of this world. They are children of wrath, devoted to destruction under the curse of God's righteous and holy law, whose vengeance is ready to be executed upon them.

15. And God may justly abandon and abhor them, and give them up to utter ruin, who have renounced the only true way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and of walking before God in faith and holy obedience, according to his mind and will; and have wandered from the path of truth and duty into the ways of sin and error, that lead to eternal misery, as they tread in the very steps of that infamously wicked prophet, Balaam the son

son of Beor, (Numb. xxii. 5.) which in the Babylonian dialect is pronounced Bosor; and follow his detestable example, who, notwithstanding all his fair pretences to the contrary, hanker'd after, and had a heart in love with the iniquitous rewards which Balak offered him, that he might unrighteously curse God's Israel.

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with mans voice, for had the madness of the prophet.

16. But he was severely reprov'd for his sin in going about to transgress the positive command of the Lord, \* and that by a brute beast, the ass he rode upon, which, though naturally a dumb creature, was miraculously enabled to speak with an articulate voice like a man; which was a strong indication to the infatuated prophet, that he ought by no means to have persisted in his mad and foolish attempt, which could only turn to his own confusion. (Numb. xxii. 22—32.)

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

17. To give a little further account of the false teachers I am speaking of, they are deceitful, unstable, and utterly destitute of all that is good; their high pretences to knowledge and piety are like wells that bid fair for the relief of a thirsty traveller; but, having no water in them, disappoint his hopes: And as clouds often look promising for rain to refresh the earth, but are soon dispersed by tempestuous winds, and produce noxious vapours instead of any good effects; so these deceivers pretend to make their proselytes wise to salvation, but are carried by the violence of their corruptions from one error and sin to another, with such a malignant influence, that neither they nor their followers ever come to the knowledge of the truth, and the practice of holiness; and the thickest cloud of horrible darkness, misery and despair is kept in store, by the righteous judgement of God, for these vile miscreants to be their dreadful portion for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through

18. For when they utter great and pompous words with an air of sanctity, and of making some wonderful discoveries, they are all a noise about nothing, empty sounds that vent the pride and vanity of their own hearts; and are thrown out as a bait to entice and catch unwary souls, by being accommodated to the sensual in-

#### N O T E

\* Though Balaam had once and again said, that he could not go beyond the word of the Lord, and was constrained to refuse Balak's offer: Yet it appears from the whole history of him in Numbers, (see chap. xxii. xxiii.) that his covetous heart was so set upon the offered bribe, as to make him earnestly desirous, and exceeding restless in attempts, to get a dispensation of God's express command that he should not go with Balak's mes-

sengers to curse Israel; and he certainly would have cursed them, had not God invincibly over-ruled his mind, and restrained him from it, contrary to his own inclination: And when he could not carry his point, he gave such wicked counsel, as was the means of drawing Israel into a provoking trespass against the Lord, which brought a dreadful plague upon them, as appears from Numb. xxi. 16, and Rev. li. 14.

much wanton-  
ness, those that  
were clean esca-  
ped from them  
who live in er-  
ror;

19 While they  
promise them-  
selves liberty, they them-  
selves are the  
servants of cor-  
ruption; for of  
whom a man is  
overcome, of the  
same is he  
brought in bon-  
dage.

20 For if af-  
ter they have es-  
caped the pol-  
lutions of the  
world through  
the knowledge  
of the Lord and  
Saviour Jesus  
Christ, they are  
again entangled  
therein and over-  
come; the  
latter end is  
worse with them  
than the begin-  
ning.

inclinations of depraved nature, and to the lascivious  
temper of those, that had indeed been brought off  
from the errors of Judaism, or of Heathenism, and in  
their outward behaviour, \* for a while at least, had  
fled from the conversation and practices of such as led  
wicked lives according to their erroneous principles.

19. At the same time that they flatter their follow-  
ers with promises of all the liberty they can wish for,  
to indulge their licentious pleasures, without fear or  
danger, they are themselves the worst of slaves to the  
corruptions of their own hearts, which will issue in  
their final destruction: For whatever a man is intirely  
overmatched and conquered by, as they are by their  
own lusts, he is brought into an absolute and slavish  
subjection to it, like a captive in war that is fallen in-  
to the hands of a victorious enemy; and all apostates  
will surely find that such a sort of pretended liberty is  
the vilest slavery.

20. For if after they have been so far externally reform-  
ed from the gross and scandalous practices of the men of  
this world which lies in wickedness, (1 John v. 19)  
as to have fled from those defilements in life, though  
not in heart †, through the convictions and restraints  
that they were brought under by the notions they had  
received of Jesus Christ, as a sovereign and a saviour,  
to deliver them from sin and the wrath to come; if,  
after all this, they are again ensnared and involved in  
those iniquities, and, like persons thoroughly conquer-  
ed and governed by them, yield themselves up as ser-  
vants to obey them; their case is more aggravatedly  
guilty, dangerous and hopeless, than it was before they  
knew any thing of Christ and the gospel; and especi-  
ally than it was, when they first had some conceptions  
of them.

21. For

#### N O T E S.

\* Some good copies instead of clean  
or truly (*οὐκ ἁγία*); read a little or a little  
while; (*λίαν*) others, almost; (*ὅσους*)  
and the Ethiopic, a few, (*ὅσους*) Vid.  
Mill. in loc. But which ever reading  
we follow, it seems to relate only to a  
change of notions, and an external re-  
formation. (See the note on ver. 20.)

† Escaped the pollutions of the world  
through the knowledge of Christ, and  
clean escaped from them who live in er-  
ror, (ver. 18. see the note there) are the  
strongest expressions of good that are us-  
ed in the description of these apostates,  
and yet neither these, nor any other, im-  
port that they ever were really partak-

ers of special saving grace: For persons  
(like the stony and thorny ground hear-  
ers, Matth. xiii. 20—22 and like Herod,  
Mark vi. 20.) may be so impressed by  
mere notions of Christ and the gospel, as  
to be restrained from gross sins, and  
brought to a credible profession of obe-  
dience, for a while, to the divine com-  
mands, and not be thoroughly turned in  
heart to God, as it is apparent these ap-  
ostates were not, by their being repre-  
sented still the same in their natural  
disposition, as the dog is, that returns to  
his own vomit, and the sow to her wal-  
lowing in the mire, ver. 22. (see the pa-  
raphrase there)

20 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

21. For their sin and punishment would really have been less, had they never heard, or received any notion of Christ and the way of holiness, and of righteousness, through him to eternal life, than, after they have been acquainted with it, to revolt and apostatize from the pure and holy doctrine, which had been preached to them with divine authority to bind it upon their consciences. (See Matth. xi. 20—24. and John ix. 41. and xv. 22.)

22. But it has fallen out with them according to two ancient proverbs, one of which is recorded in the divinely true word of God, (Prov. xxvi. 11.) and both are remarkably verified in these apostates; they, under the power of conviction by the light of the gospel, eased their burdened consciences by casting off some vicious practices which they had been addicted to: but their nature not being changed by renewing grace, and their inmost temper being still the same as ever, when their pangs wore off, they betook themselves again to their former filthy courses with as much eagerness as before; and so they are like a dog that had cast up what was offensive to his stomach; but, continuing a dog still, and acting suitable to his own nature as such, he licks up his own vomit again: and, under all their external reformatations, they are like a sow that was washed from the filth she had contracted by wallowing in mud and dirt; but, being a sow still, returns according to her own swinish temper, to rolling herself about in the mire again.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How pernicious and detestable are heretical teachers, whose corrupt principles and practices are subversive of the gospel, even to constructively denying that God, who they own has wrought wonderful deliverances to them in his providence for them, as his professing people! They put on specious appearances of wisdom and piety to entice, ensnare, defile, and ruin unstable souls: But with all their high swelling words of vanity, they are void of all good, like wells and clouds without water; and walk after the flesh. They carry on the vilest designs of covetousness, pride, luxury, and all manner of uncleanness, and are a reproach to the Christian name, and all religious society. They presumptuously despise the best of things, which they know nothing of, but which stand in opposition to their carnal views; and under vain boasts and deceitful promises to others of a liberty, which is downright licentiousness, they are themselves the worst of slaves, under every tyrannizing lust, to their own perdition, and the perdition of those that apostatize from Christ and the gospel, through their influence. How shocking are these thoughts! But we need not be stumbled at them, since we are forewarned that such seducers would arise in the church, and draw away many into their mischievous errors and sins. "But, ah, how dreadful is the condemnation of those who preach and propagate, and of those who are perverted by heresies that tend to, and will issue in eternal destruction! They have forsaken the only true way to eternal life; and the truth of



of the gospel is defamed by them, and by others on their account. They are under the curse of God, and liable, without repentance, to severer rebukes than he gave to Balaam for his iniquity, by miraculously opening the mouth of the ass he rode upon. Judgement is already passed upon them in the purpose and word of God; and their damnation hastens apace, till it come with fury upon them, as it did upon the fallen angels, and the sinners in the old world in the days of Noah that eminent preacher of righteousness, and upon the profligate cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are held, as it were in adamant chains, to be punished at the great day. But the righteous, who are grieved at the transgressions of the wicked, shall be as effectually delivered, in God's way and time, from all evil, as Noah was from the deluge, and Lot from the conflagration of those infamous cities. Alas! How heavy will the destruction of the deceivers and deceived be! They shall utterly perish for, and in their own corruption, and receive the dismal reward of all their unrighteousness, in which they rioted and delighted, with open impudence; and the most hideous darkness of horror and despair is laid up in store for their endless misery. Ah! How aggravated is their guilt; and how proportionable must be their punishment, who have been externally reformed through convictions by gospel-light; but, taking up short of a work of heart changing grace, and remaining still the same as ever, in their corrupt temper, return with eagerness to the vices which they had formerly indulged, but which pangs of conscience forced them, for a while, to give up; and so are like the dog that licks up the vomit, which he discharged while it offended his stomach; and like the sow that was washed, and returns with pleasure to wallowing in the mire! O how much better would it have been for such people to have never known the way of righteousness, than in this manner to abuse their knowledge of it! Their condition, after all, is inexpressibly more miserable and hopeless than ever it was before; while the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

## C H A P. III.

*The Apostle declares the design of this epistle to be the same with that of the former, to remind them of Christ's final coming to judgement, 1. 2. Observes that scoffers at Christ's second coming were to be expected under the gospel-state, 3. 4. Confutes their vain and insulting objections against it, and shews that he will certainly appear at unawares, when the present frame of nature will be dissolved by fire, 5—10. And infers from thence, and from the new state of things that will then be introduced, the necessity of holiness, patience and steadfastness in the faith, 11—18.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**T**HIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *word* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

1. **T**HE principal design of this second epistle, which I now write to you, my dear brethren in the Lord, beloved of him and me for his sake, is much the same with that of the former; in both which I would excite the attention and caution of sincere souls among you, that are not yet corrupted in the faith, but need

to be armed against false teachers, by reminding and solemnly warning such of you, again and again, (chap. i. 13.) of their destructive schemes and attempts to overthrow your faith and hope, holiness and joy.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

2. I am earnestly desirous that ye may bear in mind, and seriously reflect upon the predictions and doctrines, which were delivered in former times by *holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; (chap. i. 21.) and were more lately confirmed by the commandment, which we, the inspired apostles of our Lord Jesus, the King and Saviour of the church, have received from him, and delivered in word and writing to you, as about other things, so particularly about his second coming to judgement, (chap. i. 16.) that ye may be fortified against the pernicious influence of secret and open seducers, and not be stumbled at them.

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

3. Especially since ye have been forewarned, and may well know, (Jude ver. 17. 18.) that in this last age of God's dispensations toward the church, there would arise among them profane despisers and deriders of the most important points of divine revelation; men, who in the course of their lives give themselves up to, and follow their own carnal devices and corrupt inclinations, passions and appetites.

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

4. And, under the power of infidelity, they are continually saying in a way of taunt, jeer, and insult, like those ancient scoffers, *Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it.* (Isa. v. 19.) What is become of the promise of your Lord's appearing as judge of the world, (ver. 7.) to put an end to the present frame of nature; and to take vengeance on his enemies, and deliver his followers out of all their troubles, which ye Christians so confidently talk of, and expect on the foot of divine predictions? Where is there any sign of this? Do not ye plainly see that it is all fancy and delusion, and that there is nothing in it? For ever since the days of our fathers, who, ye say, had the promise of it, and foretold it, but who are long ago dead and gone, or, as ye call it, are fallen asleep to awake again at the general resurrection, all things in the whole course of nature continue, without any remarkable alteration, just the same as they were, even from the beginning of the world to this very day. Thus these mockers vainly argue that, because Christ is not yet come to judgement, he never will: But all this reasoning and ridicule is entirely groundless and mere trifling; it proceeds only from the blindness and perverseness of their own corrupt hearts and minds.

5. For

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.

5. For they wilfully shut their eyes against the scripture-account of the great things, that God has done in his own time, which might satisfy them, that as all things are possible to him; so no argument can be drawn against his never doing what he has not yet seen fit to do: They will not seriously consider, as they ought, that, after an immense duration from all eternity had run out, he by a sovereign almighty command, saying, *Let it be so, and it was so*, created, above four thousand years ago, the aerial heavens, (see the note on ver. 7.) with all the waters in the firmament; and the earth, consisting of land and sea, raising the dry land above the surface of the sea, to which he set bounds. (Gen. i. 6---10. and Ps. civ. 9.) and placing some part of the earth under the waters, and encompassing and moistening the rest with them, that the dry land might not crumble to pieces.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

6. By means of which waters from the heavens above and the great deep below, the old world, after it had continued in the same state about sixteen hundred and fifty-six years, was overflowed; and all mankind, except eight persons, (see the note on chap. ii. 5.) were utterly destroyed by the universal deluge; (Gen. vii. 1---23.) So that there is no room to pretend, that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation; or that any length of forbearance can prevent an accomplishment of the prophecies of Christ's coming to judge the world at the last day; which will bring a more terrible destruction upon the wicked than was suffered by Noah's flood, after it had been foretold an hundred and twenty years. (Gen. vi. 3.)

7. But the aerial heavens\* and this earth, as subsisting in their present form, are kept in their courses as secure as a treasure, (τὸ θησαυρισμένον σίδηρον) according to God's promise, (Gen. viii. 22.) by the same powerful and effective word of command, which at first created, and afterwards brought destruction upon them: But they are so far from being designed to abide for ever, that they are only reserved for the appointed season of

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

H 2

their

#### N O T E.

\* By the heavens, as I take it, is meant here, and in ver. 5. the aerial heaven, the plural being put, by an analogy of number, for the singular, as it frequently is in other places; (see the note on Matth. xxi. 7.) for the heavens and the earth are here spoken of in opposition to those of the old world, which could mean nothing more than the earth and its former atmosphere, the

state of which underwent a great alteration by the flood; and as the waters of the heavens and the earth were a preparation of materials for the universal deluge, so are the fiery comets in the air, and subterraneous fires in the earth for the universal conflagration of the world, which will not be till the day of judgement. See Dr Whitby's note.

their final dissolution, which will be, not by water, as before, (Gen. ix. 9---11.) but by an universal conflagration, that will set them all on fire, and consume them at the general judgement of the great day; which will certainly be the most dreadful that ever was known to all impious scoffers at it, and to all that fear not God, and despise the only Saviour, who are reserved for destruction against that awful day.

8 But, beloved be not ignorant of this one thing, That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

8. But, though ungodly men raise objections against the promise of Christ's coming to judgement, as if it never would be fulfilled, because so long a time is already past without any visible appearance of it; (ver. 4.) and though *because sentence against their evil works is not speedily executed; their hearts are fully set in them to do evil*, (Eccles. viii. 11.) Yet, my dear Christian brethren, whom I consider as beloved of the Lord, I would not have you strangers to, or unmindful of this one thought, which is enough to confute their vain and ignorant cavils, and to quiet your own minds, namely, that with the eternal Jehovah, who is from everlasting to everlasting God, and beholds all things past, present, and to come, in one comprehensive view, a day and a thousand years are equally but as a point of time, compared with his own immense duration without beginning, change or end, (Ps. xc. 2, 4.) and that, in his account, the longest succession of years is infinitely less than a single day is in our ways of reckoning, for fulfilling his purposes and promises; the precise time of which he has fixed, but reserved as a secret in his own breast.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness) but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

9 As to the great promise in particular, which we are speaking of, the Lord is not dilatory in performing it, as some libertines impiously suggest, to discredit the thing itself; or, as some of his own people may be apt to think, through the workings of too much impatience and unbelief, under their present burdens of sin and sorrow: But it may be said in this case, as in a prophecy of the Messiah's days, (Habak. ii. 3.) *The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry one moment beyond its set time*: And what some scoffers may count such a delay, as defeats all expectation of the event, is only an exercise of the kind long-suffering and forbearance of God towards us, \* who are the objects of his special

#### N O T E.

\* As the persons here meant by all, with, and are apparently all along in are such as the apostle ranked himself this chapter, distinguished from scoffers and

special love; that the whole number of our body, who belong to the election of grace, (Rom. xi. 5.) may be called in their several generations; he having determined in his eternal wisdom and will, that none of these should perish with the scoffers and ungodly before mentioned; (ver. 3, 7.) but that all and every one of them should be turned from their iniquities, and be brought by his grace, to that evangelical repentance, which is to life and salvation. (ver. 15.)

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

10. But how long soever God may defer the day of final reckoning and retribution, which may be emphatically stiled the great day (Jude ver. 6.) the day of the Lord Jesus, and the day of Christ, (1 Cor. i. 8. and v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 14. and Phil. i. 6, 10.) as he will then appear in all his glory to judge the world, this solemn day or time will certainly come in its appointed season, and that at unawares, as suddenly and unexpectedly to all, and with as much terror to the wicked, as a thief's breaking into a man's house in the dead of the night, while he is fast asleep, and has no thought about it. An awful day this will be to the consternation and ruin of those that are not prepared for it, in which the present state of the aerial heavens will come to a period,

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## N O T E.

and ungodly men, (ver. 3, 7.) God's *not willing that any should perish*, &c. seems to refer to those who are often called beloved in the context, and particularly in the preceding verse, which may naturally include, at least, their being *loved of God*, as it is expressed Rom. i. 7. and who had been spoken of as *having obtained like precious faith* at the beginning of this epistle, (chap. i. 1.) and stiled *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*. (1 epistle i. 2.) And as it cannot reasonably be thought that the long suffering of God was designed for the salvation of those scoffers and ungodly men, who are reserved for destruction, together with the heavens and the earth, against the day of judgement, (ver. 7.) so his *long-suffering to us-ward* may best be understood as relating to those; i. e. inclusive of those of them that were *still* to be called in their successive generations, who, as one body, or one sort of people, may be spoken of by the apostle in the first person plural as the whole church, inclusive of those that shall be alive at the second coming of Christ, are in 1 Thes. iv. 15, 17. (See the note there, and the paraphrase on

Matth. xxiv. 22.) Accordingly, the design of God in his long-suffering toward them is, *that none of them should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance* in their proper season. Or, if instead of *to us-ward* (εἰς ἡμᾶς) we admit of the reading of the Alexandrian and Stevens's copies, which have it *for you*, or *for your sakes*, (ὡς ὑμᾶς) and are followed by the Syriac, Ethiopic, and several other versions, (vide Mill. in loc.) it amounts to much the same. — But if, after all, any will insist upon it, that what the apostle here says is to be extended to mankind in general, its meaning, on this supposition, may be, as Messrs Græcock and Pyle have given it, that the Lord defers his coming in his great long suffering and patience toward sinners, to afford all of them the utmost opportunities of seeing their errors, and reforming their practices; it being his gracious design to do all, that his justice and goodness will permit, for their salvation; or be not being willing, so far as may consist with his infinite wisdom, justice and goodness, that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

(see the note on ver. 7.) by an universal convulsion of all nature with a rapid motion and horrid roar, like a violent storm or tempest, and all the component principles of elementary substances shall melt, like wax, through excessive heat in the general conflagration; and this earth with all its rich and stately furniture of nature and art, which carnal men place their happiness in, shall be burnt to ashes.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

11. Since therefore it is certain that the present frame of this world, and all its sensitive enjoyments, shall be thus amazingly and entirely reduced to a dissolution; how should your affections, who profess to be risen with Christ, be set on things above, and not on things of the earth? (Col. iii. 1, 2.) And with what watchfulness, care and circumspection ought ye to behave in all manner of purity and holiness of heart and life toward God and man, and in the exercise of every grace and discharge of every religious duty, with a steadfastness, perseverance, and increasing fervour, during your short and uncertain abode in the body?

12 Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

12. How important and becoming is this for persons of your character, who are expecting, looking, longing, and tending in your earnest prayers, desires, hopes and preparations for the time, when that final decisive day of the Lord Jesus shall come according to giving appointment, in which, as has been observed (ver. 10.) the aerial heavens being all in a flame shall be destroyed, and all the constituent principles of the atmosphere, together with the earth and all things in it, shall be melted down by an intense dissolving heat, into a confused chaos, like that, out of which they were originally formed? (Gen. i. 2.)

13 Nevertheless, as the particles of matter, that compose those bodies, will not be annihilated, though wonderfully altered from what they are in their present contexture; we, who believe in Jesus, are supported under present calamities, and awful prospects of this tremendous catastrophe, with joyful hopes of its turning to our unspeakable happiness and glory; while according to the true and faithful promise of our God, (Isa. lxxv. 17. and lxxvi. 22.) we expect and long for a glorious

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#### N O T E.

\* New heavens and a new earth, in the stile of the Prophet Isaiah are, strong figures to represent the glorious change, that should be made in the affairs of the church under the gospel dispensation, with an ultimate reference to the much more glorious state of

things that we look for, as to be introduced at the last day: And, possibly, new heavens and a new earth, of a more refined and excellent nature than the present, may in a literal sense be created, out of the dissolved materials, to be the habitation of the saints for ever.

But,

rious and refining change of the present state of things, which for its excellency, as the product of the almighty power and goodness that created this world, may well be stiled new heavens and a new earth, in which will be nothing that defiles, but all spotless purity; and in which none but righteous and holy persons shall dwell for ever. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless:

14. Therefore, my beloved brethren, since on the foot of divine revelation, ye earnestly desire, and justly hope for such a glorious and blessed alteration of the whole frame of nature, when Christ shall come to judge the world at the last day, let it be your utmost care and endeavour through grace, to behave as becomes the expectants of such wonderful events, that ye may meet the Lord Jesus, whenever they come to pass, without terror, and may be found by him as your judge, and in him with acceptance, comfort and holy boldness, as washed in his blood, and sanctified by his spirit; and so may be, not like those that are spots and blemishes to Christian societies (chap. ii. 13.) but may appear before him holy and without blemish, free from all defilement, as well as condemnation. (Eph. v. 27.)

15. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

15. And to encourage you hereunto, set it down as a sure principle in your own minds, that the great patience and long forbearance of our Lord towards a sinful world, which his enemies, to countenance their unbelief of his ever coming, call slackness, is really designed for, tends to, and shall issue in, not only your own complete salvation, but likewise in the salvation of the whole number of God's elect: see the note on ver. 9.) And the point I have been principally insisting upon is quite agreeable to what our dearly beloved brother in the Lord and my fellow apostle Paul, has also delivered in his epistle to professing Christians of your own nation, \* (Heb. ix. 27, 28. and x. 36. 37.) which he

#### N O T E.

But, whatever the meaning be, they are to succeed the dissolution of the present frame of the heavens and the earth by fire, and the day of judgment (ver. 10—13) and therefore seem to have no relation to the thousand years of Christ's glorious reign on earth, which is to precede these great events. (See the note Rev. xxi. 1.)

\* Hath written to you is generally understood as referring to the epistle to the Hebrews, by most commentators, who take the Apostle Peter's epistles to have been wrote to the converted Jews. But some, who take it to have been wrote to the converted Gentiles, sup-

pose the reference is to those epistles to Gentile churches in Asia Minor, to which the Apostle Paul wrote.—But our Apostle seems to refer to some one of Paul's epistles in particular, with a distinction of it from all his other epistles; and I cannot but think that several passages in our Apostle's two epistles immediately point to Jewish Christians; (See the preface to this first epistle) and that the reference is more probably to the general epistle to the Hebrews, than to any epistle that was directed to only one particular church.

he wrote under divine inspiration, according to the eminent knowledge that God gave him, in which he was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. (2 Cor. xi. 5.)

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

16. He has also more or less intimated things of this nature in the generality of his other epistles, in which he warns Jews, as well as Gentiles, against false teachers and seducers; and speaks of God's long-suffering; of Christ's second coming and its momentous consequences; and of believers patiently waiting for it, and the like: Among which things (*¶* *¶*) there are, as he himself says to those Jews that were dull of hearing, (Heb. v. 11.) some doctrines, which though certain truths, and as plain in themselves as their sublime and spiritual nature well admit of, are not easily apprehended and received by prejudiced and weak minds; and which, through the darkness, pride and corruptions of men's own hearts, they that are not taught of God by his Spirit *†*, but are unskilful in the word of righteousness, or are sceptical and unsettled in their principles, wrack and torture to a wrong meaning, and pervert the sense and use of them, as they likewise do many other passages of holy writ, both of the Old and New Testament, to their own everlasting perdition with high aggravations of their guilt, instead of receiving them with meekness and improving them, as means of making them wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things be-

17. Since therefore ye my dear brethren, are forewarned of all these things, and so forearmed against crafty seducers; and since ye know beforehand, that Christ

#### N O T E.

*†* They that are unlearned don't here mean illiterate persons, according to our common use of that word; but it is to be understood of those that are strangers to all true principles of religion, or fluctuating in their notions about it, through the corruptions of their own hearts, and so some things in the apostle Paul's writings were hard for them to understand, because they could not resist them, as well as that there were others of too spiritual and sublime a nature for their injudicious and carnal minds to take in, or indeed for any finite mind fully to comprehend. But this is no argument either against the perspicuity of scripture, especially in things that are necessary to salvation,

or against the common people's reading them; for though the apostle says, that some things in Paul's epistles, he does not say that the epistles themselves, or that many, much less all of them, are hard to be understood, but gives an honourable testimony to him and his epistles, as his beloved brother, who had wrote them according to the wisdom that God had given him; and it is supposed that these unlearned persons did read them, or at least heard them read, which he does not blame them for: but only for their making a bad use of them, as many do of the best and most necessary things in the world, by perverting them to their own destruction.



fore, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Christ will certainly come to judgement, and take vengeance upon all the ungodly, have a care lest any of you being drawn aside, (*συναχθῆναι*) with other apostates, from him, and from the way of truth and holiness, by the false notions, deceitful insinuations and vile practices (*εὐσεβείας*) of impious, immoral and lawless men, ye fall from your own stability in the doctrines, purity and profession of the gospel, in which ye have hitherto persevered.

13 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

18. But to help you against all declensions and revolts, let it be your earnest prayer, and endeavour in the use of all proper means, to be progressive in daily exercises and increases of every Christian grace, as also in an abiding sense of the free love and favour of God, according to the gospel; and in a clear, fiducial, practical and experimental acquaintance with the person and offices, doctrines, promises, and commandments of our divine Lord and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ, and with your own personal interest in him: To whom be ascribed, as is most justly due, all adoration, worship and honour, henceforth and for ever. May we, together with all the saints and angels, sincerely add, in testimony of our approbation, hope and assurance of its being so, *Amen!*

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

What need have we to be often reminded of the doctrines and commandments that are delivered to us by our Lord Jesus and his inspired prophets and apostles; and to be cautioned against the errors and evil practices of wicked and designing men, that we may not be unsettled in our religious principles by them! And how important is it to believers, for preventing this evil, that they grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ all their days! The great doctrines of divine revelation are evidently confirmed by the harmony of inspired writings, both of the Old and New Testament; and yet, alas! How many are there who, through wilful blindness and prejudices, ridicule, and raise groundless objections against the most interesting points of faith, like that of Christ's coming to judgement! And how many that have not learnt the first principles of the oracles of God, but are of a sceptical temper, and pervert the plain meaning of various scriptures to their own destruction! But the word of the Lord stands fast for ever; and the promise of Christ's second coming shall certainly be fulfilled in its appointed season, to the joy of the saints, and the confusion of sinners. As this world was once destroyed by an universal deluge of water; so the whole system of its present frame shall hereafter be set on fire, dissolved and burnt up by an universal blaze of melting heat, to which it is reserved against the day of judgement, and perdition of ungodly men, who shall be tormented for ever with unquenchable flames. But O what a magnificent state of bliss and glory in the new heavens and new earth, all refined, pure and holy, shall the habitation of the righteous be, without any mixture of sin or tincture! How soon this finishing day will come, the Lord only knows, but it certainly will come, and that as suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief in the night, with terrible surprise to all that shall be unprepared for it. Some indeed would suspect that, because it is hitherto deferred, it never will be at all. Vain and

and foolish thought ! A thousand years are infinitely less in the account of the eternal and unchangeable God, than one day, is in ours ; and what may seem to be a delay in the opinion of some, is only his long forbearance and patience towards a sinful world, till all his elect be gathered in, that every one of them may be brought to saving repentance. Since therefore we, who believe in Jesus, know that there will be a total dissolution of this world and of all things in it ; how circumspect, holy, and religious, wean'd from the present life and all its concerns, ought we to be in our temper and behaviour ! And since we desire and expect a perfect state of happiness in that eminent day of the Lord, and are forewarn'd of deceivers, that would turn us aside from him, and from our way to heaven ; how solicitous should we be for constant supplies of grace to enable us so to walk with God, as to find favour and acceptance with him in the beloved, till we be presented holy and unblameable in his sight through Jesus Christ ! To whom be glory and honour through all ages, and for ever, Amen.

# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE

## First Epistle general of JOHN.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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### The Preface to the First Epistle of JOHN.

**T**HOUGH the name of the writer of this, and the two following short epistles, be not prefixed to them; there is nevertheless no room to doubt but that it was the Apostle John, whose name is no more mentioned in his gospel, than in either of these epistles. All antiquity ascribes the first of them to him; and it was not long before the other two were generally esteemed canonical, and received as such; and the great similitude, and even sameness of phraseology and spirit, that runs through them all and his gospel, carry their own evidence of their being wrote by the same hand: Accordingly they cast a good light one upon another; and many passages of these epistles may be cleared up by comparing them together, and with the evangelist.

The place from whence, and the time when, they were written cannot be fully determined; but they seem to have been sent from Ephesus, or some part of Asia the less, where this apostle chiefly laboured, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, as may be conjectured from his speaking of the last time as then come, chap. ii. 18. which probably relates to the last period of the Jewish church, and state, and the commencement of the gospel dispensation, which is the last, and shall remain to the end of the world; and from his mentioning many antichrists and false teachers, as already appearing, which our Lord foretold would arise before the desolation of the temple, chap. ii. 18. and iv. 1. compared with Matth. xxiv. 24.

The persons, to whom this epistle was wrote, were not any particular church, but all Christians in general of that age, perhaps principally Jews, but inclusive of Gentiles, with a view to all succeeding generations; on which account it is called a general epistle. And the  
immediate

immediate occasion of writing it appears to have been taken from the pernicious efforts of Judaizing and antichristian teachers, who had broached many gross errors in doctrine and practice, and were the fore-runners of others, who the apostle foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, would rise in after ages to corrupt and trouble the church under papal tyranny, superstition and idolatry: In opposition to all which, our Apostle's chief design was to establish believers in the faith of Christ's being the Son of God, and the true Messiah: to lead them into affecting views of the love of the Father in sending him, and bestowing the most glorious benefits upon them on his account; and thereby engaging their love to him and to one another, and sweetly constraining them to depart from all iniquity, and yield a cheerful obedience to all divine commandments, answerable to their high privileges, hopes, and obligations.

He begins with giving them the strongest evidence of the truth of what he delivered to them concerning Christ, that they might share, and rejoice with himself and his fellow apostles, in their happy communion with the Father and the Son; and reminds them of their imperfection through indwelling sin, and at the same time of the necessity of departing from the practice of it, chap. i. He then comforts them under a sense of the disallowed sin that still remained in them; but shews that, if they were real Christians, their freedom from its dominion must be demonstrated, by their unfeigned obedience to God's commands, by their love to the brethren, and sitting loose from this world; and by watching and guarding against seducers, in virtue of the anointings of the Spirit which they were favoured with, chap. ii. He thereupon breaks out into a rapturous admiration of the love of God in making them his children; and infers from their hope of perfect holiness and happiness with Christ, that they ought to abstain from all iniquity, and live after a holy rate and in a cordial affection to all their Christian brethren, as those that are born of God, and have an irreconcilable aversion to sin, chap. iii. From hence proceeds to caution them against hearkening to every pretender to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the spirit of truth and of error; and adds various arguments to excite to brotherly love, chap. iv. Sets before them the efficacy of evangelical love, as springing from faith in Christ, whose divine and saving character is attested by three unexceptionable witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, together with that which believers have in themselves; assures them that all their prayers, according to the will of God, shall be answered; that they who are born of God shall be preserved from the evil one, and are happily distinguished from the world which lies in wickedness; and concludes with an exhortation to renounce all idolatry, chap. v.

## C H A P. I.

*The Apostle prefaces his epistle to believers in general with evident testimonies to Christ, for promoting their happiness and joy, 1—4. Shows the necessity of a life of holiness, in order to communion with God, and relieves them under a sense of indwelling sin, which they ought humbly to acknowledge still remains with them; but from which there is an all-cleansing virtue in the blood of Jesus, 5—10.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**T**HAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life;

**T**HE design of this epistle is to set forth what I and other apostles of our Lord are fully assured of, upon undeniable evidence, and cannot but testify (Acts iv. 20.) concerning the person and saving office of Christ. This divine person, who in his original nature, was before all worlds, \* truly and properly God, the same in essence with, though distinct in personality from God the Father; whom, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, (John i. 1, 2, 14. see the notes there) we often heard in his public preaching and private discourses; whom we also have seen with our own eyes, as at numberless times before, so again and again after his death and resurrection; whom we have attentively and delightfully considered on various occasions, and whose glory we beheld, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. (John i. 4.) even after, as well as before his resurrection we had all desirable opportunities of touching and feeling him with our hands; (Luke xxiv. 39. and John xx. 27.) and so had all possible demonstration of the reality of his risen human body, as consisting of flesh and bones, which he had assumed into personal union with himself, who is with God the Father and the Life; (John i. 1, 4.) as he is the living personal Word of God,

## N O T E.

\* Though from the beginning, (αὐτὸς ἀρχῆς) and in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ) as we have it John i. 1. are somewhat different expressions, yet as Christ is here styled in the next verse eternal Life, it is natural to take in his eternal existence, correspondent to this apostle's assertion of it John i. 1. and we have known him that is from the beginning, (αὐτὸς ἀρχῆς) chap. ii. 13. 14. see the note there,) whether applied to the Father or Son, evidently relates to his e-

ternal existence; and our apostle speaks of names that were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, αὐτοὶ καλεσθέντες καὶ ἔτι) Rev. xvii. 8. which I think means from eternity; accordingly we may take that which was from the beginning to relate to the eternal deity of Christ rather than to the beginning of the gospel dispensation, though it may bear the last of these senses in some other parts of this epistle.

God, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the fountain and author of the life of all creatures, and particularly of all spiritual and eternal life to his people.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)

2. For he in whom is life, and who is the life-giver, (John i. 4.) was *God manifested in the flesh*; (1 Tim. iii. 16.) and we, his apostles, have actually seen and conversed with him in his human nature; and, as authorised by his immediate commission, do bear our testimony to him in all his characters, and discover to you his divine person and offices, who had originally and eternally life in himself, and was from all eternity co-existent with God the Father, and was conspicuously made known to us *in the fulness of time*, in which God sent him forth, as his own Son, *made of a woman, made under the law, &c.* (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3. That, I say, which we, in the manner but now mentioned, have both seen and heard of him, and in which it was impossible for us to be mistaken, we now publish and make known to you, to the end that ye, who believe in him, may have a partnership and communion, as one spiritual and holy Body with us, in all the gracious promises, ordinances and influences, blessings and privileges, that belong to the gospel-state, and that we ourselves are admitted to: and this is a communion of the most excellent, honourable and heavenly nature, richly worth your coming into; it being in reality a communion with God the Father himself in all the blessings of his love, which are communicated to us through Jesus Christ, his eternal Son; and with this dear Son of the Father in all the blessings of his purchase, as, through him, we are *children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) and *have access through him by one Spirit to the Father*; (Eph. ii. 18.) and so have communion with the holy Spirit too, in all his graces and comforts, (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) which is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; where we shall have the most intimate and blissful communion with the sacred three in all their glory for ever.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

4. And our aim in writing these great things to you is that ye may have a fulness of solid satisfaction and rejoicing in this delightful and holy communion, which makes up the noblest pleasure we are capable of, till it be perfected in heaven.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him,

5. Now, in order to your having the joy of this excellent communion, and being partakers of all the blessings of it, ye ought to know what God is, and who they are that shall inherit this grand promise (*ἐκ τούτων ἔστιν*)

and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

of eternal life. (Chap. ii. 25.) and the sum of that doctrine concerning his nature and perfections, which we ourselves have heard from the mouth of our Lord in his ministration upon earth, and which, as his messengers, we publish to you, is this, that God is an absolutely perfect spirit; (Matth. v. 48. and John iv. 24.) infinite in wisdom, purity, blessedness and glory, and in all other adorable excellencies, that can be comprehended in an idea of the most illustrious, amiable and all-penetrating light; and in him there is not the least defect of any kind, or mixture of any thing contrary, or unsuitable to his perfect Rectitude, who utterly abhors all iniquity. (See Habak. i. 13. and Ps. v. 4, 5.)

6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

6. It is therefore a plain consequence from hence, that if any of us, who bear the Christian name, pretend to be admitted to comfortable communion with God, and hope of enjoying him, who is so unspottedly pure and holy; and if, at the same time, we live in the practice of any known sin, which involves ignorance and error, and is the worst of all darkness in us, (Rom. xiii. 12. and Eph. v. 8.) but is open to his all-seeing eye; (Heb. iv. 13.) we are insincere in that profession, and practically give the lie to it, and in words deny it; (Tit. i. 16.) and we speak and act in direct contradiction to the nature and will of God, who is truth itself, and to the whole tenor and design of the gospel-revelation, or of his word, which is truth; (John xvii. 17.) yea, directly contrary to the very nature and truth of things, which render it impossible that righteousness should have any fellowship with unrighteousness, or light with darkness. (2 Cor. vi. 14.)

7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

7. But if, according to our profession, we as children of light (1 Thess. v. 5.) do indeed live and walk, under the guidance and influence of the spirit, in ways of truth and holiness, in the light of gospel-revelation, and in resemblance of him, who dwells in immortal light, (1 Tim. vi. 16;) and has said, *be ye holy; for I am holy.* (1 Pet. i. 16.) we then have the best of all communion, he with us, and we with him, in which all true believers share as fellow Christians: and one great blessing, and even the foundation of this communion is, that the precious atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who is both the anointed Saviour and the eternal eminently beloved Son of the Father, is continually efficacious for cleansing us from the guilt, condemnation and power of all our sins; and, at length, from all remaining defilement

ment and in-being of sin, which, for his sake, shall be intirely purged away, and have no more place in us, or bad effects upon us; but we shall be as like as possible to him, when *we shall see him as he is*, (chap. iii. 2.)

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.

8. However, as sin came into the world with us, and can't be utterly extirpated till we die out of it, if any of us, who pretend to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, are so ignorant, proud and vain, as to imagine that, in this present state of weakness and mortality by reason of sin, we are so thoroughly cleansed from it, as to have no remainders of its workings in us, we certainly deceive our own souls; and neither the truth of God's word, which abundantly declares the contrary, nor any true light of knowledge, grace or holiness is found in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9. If, on the other hand, we, under a *humbling sense* of our imperfections and many disallowed failures, acknowledge our transgressions to the Lord, and confess them with faith in Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of them, and with penitential shame and contrition, abhorrence of them, and full purpose of heart, by his grace, to forsake them, (Prov. xxviii. 13.) as all the iniquities of Israel were confessed over the head of the scape goat, and they afflicted their souls in reflection upon them, (Lev. xvi. 21, 29, 30.) he is so true and faithful to his promise to the redeemer, and to those that believe in him; (Isa. liii. 11. and Heb. viii. 12.) and is so just to the merit of his blood, (Rom. iii. 26.) as for his sake freely to pardon all our sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, and deed, and purge our consciences from guilt; and to cleanse us from the reigning power and defilement of all our iniquities by the sanctification of the spirit, which was purchased by the blood of his Son to purify our hearts and lives, that we may be fit for communion with him in this world, till we be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy in the world to come*, (Jude ver. 24.)

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

10. If, after all, we assert that we have not transgressed the law of God, so as to need pardon through the blood, and sanctification by the spirit of Christ, we, in effect, make God himself a liar, as we therein deny the truth of what he has said in his word, which pronounces on the whole race of mankind, that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*; (Rom. iii. 23.) and we thereby shew that the truth of the gospel has no place in us, the very nature of which supposes us to be sinners, and is designed to bring us to a humble, penitent confession of sin; (ver. 9.) and to faith in the



the Redeemer's blood for the remission of it, (ver. 7.) and for victory over it till we shall be completely delivered from the whole of sin in that heavenly *Jerusalem*, into which nothing shall enter that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

### RECollections.

What incontestible evidence have we from faithful eye and ear witnesses of the truth of the gospel-revelation, concerning Christ and the benefits brought in by him ! And what a blessed communion are true believers hereby led into with God the Father, and his only begotten Son, who as a divine person was ever living with him, and as the incarnate Saviour is the author of eternal life to them ! And O the fulness of joy that abounds in them, who are partakers of these blessings ! But as God is infinitely pure and holy, and possessed of all exalted and amiable perfections, that can go into the notion of the most illustrious light, and is absolutely abhorrent of all iniquity, and free from every kind of defect ; it is vain self-delusion, and directly contrary to him, to his word, to the nature of things, and to the truth of the gospel, for any who live in a course of sin, which is the worst of all darkness, to imagine, or pretend, that they have communion with him. And, on the other hand, it is as vain and self-deceiving, and as directly giving the lie to God himself, in the declarations of his word, for any to think or say, that they are intirely free from all remainder of sin in this frail and mortal state. But if, with humble acknowledgements of indwelling sin and of our need of a Saviour, and with faith in him, we conscientiously confess and depart from all iniquity, and walk under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, in the light of truth and holiness, conformable to the nature, will and commandments of God, who is light, we really have communion with him, a fundamental part of which is, that the infinitely precious blood of Christ, his beloved Son, is effectually applied to us for the remission of all our sins, and for subduing their power in us : And God is so faithful to his promise, and just to the merit of his Son, as to pass by our transgressions for his sake, and gradually sanctify and cleanse us from all iniquity : till, at length, in a better world, we shall " be holy, and without blemish ; not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

### C H A P. II.

*The Apostle directs believers to the advocacy and atonement of Christ for help and relief against sinful infirmities, 1. 2. Describes the effects of a saving knowledge of, and union with him, as productive of obedience and love to the brethren, 3—11. Addresses Christians under the various characters of little children, young men and fathers, 12—14. Cautions them all against an inordinate love of this world and anti-christian errors, 15—23. And encourages them to stand fast in the faith and holiness of the gospel, according to the light and influence of the spiritual unction, which they had received, 24—29.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**M**Y little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1. **T**HE design of what I have thus far wrote is to caution you, whom I consider with all affection, endearment and tenderness, as though ye were the young offspring of my own bowels, \* to take heed of giving way to any known iniquity, or of falling into it thro' surprize or temptation, much more of living in the practice of it: and it is with this further view, that, as we all have sinned, and remainders of corruption still attend us; (chap. i. 8. 10.) so, to prevent your despairing of mercy on that account, ye may consider that, † when any of us, who believe, fall, through infirmity and temptation, into one or another transgression, (*For there is not a just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not, Eccles. vii. 20.*) we have a glorious and ever prevailing intercessor to plead our cause with his and our father, the judge of all, (Heb. xii. 23.) against the charges of law and justice, and the accusations of Satan, that our iniquities may not be charged and punished upon us according to their deserts, nor be suffered to prevail and reign in us, as they do in others: and this advocate is no less than Jesus Christ, *the Lord our righteousness*, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) who is perfectly holy and righteous in himself, and has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for us, which he presents before the throne in his intercession on our behalf.

2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

2. And we may safely depend upon, and take the comfort of his interest with God the Father for us, as all his advocacy is founded on the effectual atonement he has made to the full satisfaction of divine justice, that we may be forgiven all trespasses, and none of them may

## NOTES.

\* My little children is an appellation by which our apostle often addresses the whole body of these Christians, and so it is mostly to be understood, not as a term of distinction of younger and weaker from older and stronger believers, as in ver. 12. 13. (see the note there) but as a term of tenderness and endearment, as our blessed Lord himself used it to his disciples, John xiii. 33; and perhaps many whom the apostle wrote to were converted by his ministry, which engaged his most affectionate love to them; and as he was by this time an old man, it was the more de-

cent, and besitting his age, to speak to all believers under this title.

† The particle (*tan*) rendered *if* frequently signifies *when*, and particularly in the stile of our apostle, as in John xii. 32. (see the note there) and xiv. 3. and xvi. 7. And Calvin, on this place, thinks, that it ought to be resolved into a causal particle, because it cannot be but that we should sin: and so the apostle confirms what he had been saying, chap. i. 8. about sin's remaining in true believers themselves, who are far from being perfect in holiness.

may have dominion over us: and his atonement is not only for our sins, who are of Jewish extract, and have already believed; but also for the sins, not indeed of the whole race of mankind, since he prays not for them all universally, (Job xvii. 9.) and multitudes of them perish in and by their iniquities; but for the sins of all, for whom he is an advocate (ver. 1.) and who do, or shall hereafter believe in him, (John xvii. 20.) even Gentiles, as well as Jews, wheresoever they be scattered abroad through the whole world. (See the notes on John i. 29. and iii. 16.)

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

3. And it is evident to us, that we have a true and saving knowledge \* of Christ, which includes faith in him and love to him, if it has a powerful influence to engage us unto a sincere, cheerful and unreserved obedience to whatever he has commanded, both in the precepts of the moral law, and in the institutions of the gospel. (John xv. 14.)

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

4. Whoever he be that pretends to say, † I have known, loved and believed in him, and have had communion with him, (chap. i. 6.) and yet makes no conscience of keeping his holy commandments, that man speaks what is utterly false, and inconsistent with his ever having had an effectual knowledge of him: he gives the lie to his own profession, and to the word of God; and there is neither sincerity in his assertion, nor the truth of grace, or of the gospel in his heart.

5 But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

5. But whoever duly regards, holds fast and carefully observes the doctrines, ordinances and duties contained in the word of the Lord, he is undoubtedly under the eminently governing influence of that sincere and supreme love to God, which, under a sense of his love, constrains him to keep his commandments, and not count them grievous. (chap. v. 3. and see the note on chap. iv. 12.) when it is thus with us, we are hereby well assured, that we are vitally united to Christ, and interested in all his benefits.

I 2

## 6. Keeping

### N O T E.

\* Knowledge is sometimes put for, or is at least inclusive of, faith, as in Isa. liii. 11. and John xvii. 3. and at others of approbation, or love; (see the note on Matth. vii. 23.) and our context leads us to understand it here of such a judicial, affectionate, and practical knowledge, as is necessary to fellowship with Christ and a personal interest in his propitiation. — And that Christ is the person here referred to, appears from his being the immediate antecedent; accordingly I take him to be meant all along in the three following verses,

though he be not expressly mentioned again in either of them; and yet he is plainly pointed out in ver. 6.

† I know him is in the Greek (*γινωσκω*) I have known him: And the Apostle's saying, that if he, who pretends to this keeps not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him, intimates that he never had the true knowledge of Christ, or the truth of faith, or of any other grace in him, but was a hypocritical professor; otherwise it would certainly have had a better effect upon him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

6. Keeping his word is so closely connected with our union and communion with him, that every one who professes a special interest in him, as one that dwells in him, (John vi. 56.) and would make it out to himself and others, is indispensibly obliged to live and act in the course of his conversation after Christ's own example, and to tread in his steps, by a holy and humble imitation of him. (1 Pet. ii. 21.)

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning, the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

7. In my so earnestly pressing you, dear Christian brethren, to an imitation of Christ, and that with regard to the great duty of love, which I am in a special manner going to recommend to you, (ver. 8—11.) I don't write about any commandment that is entirely new; but remind you of a divine precept, which, for the substance of it, was delivered, as of perpetual obligation, long ago, even as long as the beginning of the Old Testament-revelation; and which ye were taught, with additional light and enforcements, at the first publication of the gospel among you. (See the note on John xiii. 34.) this ancient commandment, which is contained in the law given by Moses, (Lev. xix. 17. 18.) and enforced by our blessed Lord in the beginning of his ministry, is what ye heard in the word, that was preached to you at your very first believing, and entering upon the profession of his name.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you. because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

8. But to give you a larger and still more striking view of it, I now again write to explain the excellent duty of brotherly love; and to inculcate it upon you under new obligations, motives, encouragements, assistances and endearments, to enforce it, and to raise it to a higher degree of spiritual, extensive and cordial affection, according to Christ's new injunction of it, (Matth. v. 43. 44.) than ever was known or practised before; and with regard thereunto it may be called a new commandment, which is eminently copied out with the greatest truth and evidence in Christ, who in his transcendent love has set you the highest example of it, and which is imitated to a good degree in you, who are taught of God to love one another; (1 Thess. iv. 9.) because the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation, and of your former state of ignorance, error and sin passes away, (*παρέρχεται*) and in great measure is over and gone, and the clear light of the truth of the gospel in the revelation it makes of Christ, who is by way of eminence *the true light*, (John i. 9.) is now displayed in its full glory, and shines in your hearts. (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his names sake.

9. He therefore who professes to believe the gospel, and to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and purified by that means, and at the same time is under the power of an uncharitable, malicious and revengeful temper towards his Christian brother, is a stranger to evangelical light and grace, and remains in a state of sin and error, which is the worst of all darkness, to this very day.

10. On the contrary, the believer who has a cordial affectionate love to his brother for Christ's sake, in imitation of him, under the constraints of his love, and in obedience to his commands, really is, and shews that he continues to be, enlightened and renew'd by the grace of the gospel according to his profession of it; and there is no room for taking offence at him, who lays no stumbling-block before his brethren, nor is apt to take offence at them, nor will any difficulties he may meet with, in the way of his duty, be a stumbling-block to himself, to hinder his cheerfully persisting in it: *for great peace have they that love God's law, and nothing shall offend them.* (Pl. cxix. 165.)

11. But, as I said before, (ver. 9.) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress it upon your consciences, every professor of Christ's name that harbours a severe unfriendly disposition, and indulges prejudices in his heart against his brother, is still in an unregenerate state, destitute of saving knowledge, and under the power of sin; and, be his pretences what they will, he hereby shews that he goes on in such errors and evil courses as are spiritual darkness itself; and doth not understand the way that leads to eternal life, or the way in which he should walk to the glory of God, and his own and others good; nor doth he discern and consider the sad tendency and dismal consequence of his pernicious sentiments and practices, because of the natural blindness of his heart; (Eph. iv. 18. and 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4.)

12. The admonitions, cautions and encouragements which I have given, especially about the great duty of love, and shall still further give you, are such as equally concern you all, whatever be the different degrees of your gifts and graces, or of your rank and standing in Christianity. As to those of you that are young converts, or for weakness of faith and understanding, and all other religious attainments are but as babes in Christ, (1 Cor. iii. 1.)† and are apt to be mightily concerned about

13

N O T E.

† Beza, Piscator, and many expositors following them, apprehend that

the Apostle don't begin his distribution of Christians into the several classes of fathers

about pardon of sin, as little children commonly are about forgiveness from their offended parents; I write to you, because, though your faith be ever so weak, yet, being sincere, all your trespasses, as well as those of stronger believers, are freely forgiven of God, (Col. ii. 13.) for the praise of the glory of his grace, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, through the merit of his atoning blood, in whose name this great benefit has been preached; and is conveyed to you. (Luke xxiv. 47. and Acts xiii. 38.) Ye therefore should love much because much is forgiven you. (Luke vii. 47.)

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning, I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

13, 14. As to those of you that are of long standing in Christianity, and have attained a large stock of knowledge and experience, like old men and fathers, who delight to hear and speak of, search into, and reflect upon ancient things; I write to you, fathers in Christ, because ye have been a great while acquainted with, and your thoughts are much employed about the Ancient of Days, (Dan. vii. 9.) \* even God the Father and his co-eternal Son, (1 John i. 1.) together with their eternal counsels and designs according to the gospel revelation of them. Ye therefore, whose hearts are so much taken up with the eternal love of the Father and Son, ought to abound in the exercise of this grace. As to those of you, who, for zeal, activity and spiritual

#### N O T E.

fathers, young men, and little children, till he comes to the next verse, because the Greek word, (*πατριά*) here rendered little children, is different from that in the original, (*παιδιά*) which is so rendered in the 13th verse. But this criticism, I doubt, is scarce sufficient to support its design, since the last of these words (*παιδιά*) is evidently used, ver. 18. and John xxi. 5. in the same sense as the first (*πατριά*) is in several other parts of this epistle. I therefore rather incline to think that they are here and in the 13th verse to be taken, as carrying much the same meaning, to describe the lower rank of Christians; and that the Apostle begins his distinction of the several ages of believers in this verse, and repeats it just in the same order in the two following verses, which appears more natural, than to suppose that he drops little children, and mentions only fathers and young men in the first distinction of the several ranks of Christians, for which, as far as I see, no good reason can be given. And were the verses which are of modern invention

better divided, so as to join two thirds of the former part of the 13th to the 12th verse, and the last clause of the 13th to the 14th, or to begin the 14th verse with that clause, the natural order of the Apostle's way of ranging these different degrees of Christians would have appeared with more propriety and exactness. And in what he writes to them severally, there seems to be a beautiful allusion to such sort of things as are most generally suited to the taste of mankind in these different stages of life, as suggested in the paraphrase, according to Dr Goodwin's observation, (vol. iv. p. 177. 6r. 2d part) though he makes little children in this verse to relate to Christians in common.

\* Whether by him that is from the beginning we understand the Father, or the Son, which I have put both ways, leaving the reader to his choice; the Apostle speaks of the existence of the person here intended as from the beginning, (*ἀρ' ἀρχῆς*) which in either case, was eternally, before the beginning of the gospel. (See the note on chap. i. 1.)

spiritual attainments, are like young men that are come to the strength and vigour of their age, and fit for military exploits; (see Mark xiv. 51.) I write these things to you, because, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, (Eph. vi. 10.) ye have encountered, wrestled against, and obtained glorious victories over your great adversary the devil, that vile, apostate, wicked spirit, who walks about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. v. 8.) And as ye are conquerors only through him that loved you, (Rom. viii. 37.) ye ought to love him, and your brethren for his sake.—To impress these things upon you severally, I now say again, (see Gal. i. 9.) I write them to those of you who are but newly born of God, or are like infants, who usually, first of all, learn to know and love their parents; because ye have been brought to a fiducial, affectionate knowledge of God, as your heavenly Father in and through his beloved Son. I have also wrote these things to those of you, who, like fathers, are far advanced in knowledge and grace, by means of your long study, observation and experience, and who take pleasure in meditating upon the deep things of God; because ye have with great judgement, faith and love, understood much of him, and of his purposes and contrivances for your salvation, which, like himself, are from everlasting. (Eph. i. 4.) And I have wrote these things to those of you who, like young men, are grown up to maturity in spiritual growth and liveliness for action; because, being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim. ii. 1.) and strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man, (Eph. iii. 16.) ye are enabled to perform the most difficult duties, and the word of God, according to the gospel revelation, has deep root, and continues to work effectually in you: (1 Thess. ii. 13.) and by wielding this sword of the Spirit, (Eph. vi. 17.) with the hand of faith, ye have defeated and gained signal conquests over the great enemy of your souls, and all his wicked instruments that would have perverted you.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is from the beginning*. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

15. But, whether your standing and progress in religion be more, or less, I would caution all and every one of you to take heed, that, in consilience with a subordinate love which is due some persons and things, your affections be so weaned from, and mortified to this present evil world, as never to think that here is your rest; nor to be entangled with, engrossed by, or inordinately carried out after, any of its allurements, of what nature or kind soever, as though your portion

for

for happiness lay in them. If there be any among you, whose heart is supremely set upon this world, he neither has any true love to God, the father of Christ and of all true believers in him, who will admit of no competitor or rival, (Matth. vi. 24.) and reckons that to be no true love to him at all, which is not supreme \* ; nor has such an one any claim to, or right sense of the love of God to him in his own soul.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

16. For how enticing soever the things of this world be to the irregular desires of mens hearts; whether its pleasures, that are suited to gratify lewd, intemperate and luxurious inclinations; or its riches, estates and possessions, that are looked upon with a greedy wish and covetous eye, which cannot be satisfied by them; (Eccles. iv. 8.) or its honours, dignities and preferments, grand houses, furniture and equipages, and the like, which feed the lust of ambition, and are very tempting to the natural pride of men's hearts, and carry them into all the vanity of a gay, pompous and splendid way of living: so far forth as any of these are perverted, and prove ensnaring to the affections; this is not according to the original design of the Father of mercies in giving them, nor is it the product of his love to his children, or of theirs to him; no, nor can he be the approver, or author of it; but it all proceeds from the malignant influence of the things of this world upon men's carnal hearts, and their own corrupt inclinations to them.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever.

17. And still further to arm you against all temptations, and take off all inordinate affections from things on earth, (Col. iii. 2.) ye ought to consider what an uncertain, unsatisfying, fading and perishing thing this world is; that it is continually fleeting and changing hands while we are in it; and that even its best things are very precarious and transitory, and will soon come to an end; and so will all our present inclinations and desires towards it, and gratifications by its pleasures, riches and honours, as we in a little time shall have nothing farther to do with it; (1 Cor. vi. 13. and vii. 29, 31.) and then all that set their hearts upon it shall perish with it. But the true lover of God, who is wrought into a conformity to his holy will, as made known in his word; and who, from a principle of faith, as working by love, persists in a governing course of obedience to it, is possessed of substantial, satisfying and abiding realities

#### N O T E.

\* The love of the Father may relate either to his love to us, as in chap. iii. 16. and iv. 9. or to our love to him, as chap. iii. 17. and v. 2.



realities, stands with everlasting continuance in the love of God, and in a state of grace, and shall live for ever in full possession of all durable and heavenly happiness.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

18. My dearly beloved children, (see the note on ver. 1.) it is proper for me to remind you, that the Jewish dispensation is just now expiring, and the last dispensation of grace, which is to continue to the end of time, has now commenced: And as ye have been told in the predictions of our Lord and his apostles, (Matth. xxiv. 11. 24. 25. 2 Thess. ii. 3—10. and 1 Tim. iv. 1.) that deceivers would arise and set themselves against him; even so, many of this malignant spirit are already risen up in the world, as forerunners of the utter destruction of the Jewish temple and city, state and polity, and of that greatest of all antichrists who will assume the authority of Christ, and set himself up in opposition to him, (see the note on 2 Thess. ii. 4.) By this remarkable event, as it now begins to appear, we may be well assured that we are come to the very last hour (*αἰῶν*) of the Jewish state, and are entered upon the last dispensation of mercy, that God will ever afford to this sinful world; and so may be the better confirmed in the truth of those divine predictions, and the better fortified against the errors of these seducers, who make a profession of Christianity to cover their vile designs, but are really apostates from it.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.

19. They, for a while, made plausible appearances of being sincere converts, and were in communion with the churches of Christ; and afterwards departed from the faith, and went out from amongst us to broach their corrupt notions; but they really never were in good earnest of the same mind and heart with us; For if they had been true believers renewed by grace, and of the same spirit with ourselves, there is no question to be made, but that they would still have persevered in the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, and continued in communion with us. But they revolted from the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and separated themselves that they might appear to the church and the world in their true colours, for a warning to some, a caution to others, and a brand of infamy upon themselves, as mere hypocrites or false-hearted professors, which too often creep into the visible church; and that under all their flourishing pretences, it might be known that none of their fraternity were true believers, vitally united to Christ together with us.

20. But

20. But ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things.

20. But as to those of you that have not been carried away with their errors, ye have a rich unction of the Spirit in his gifts and graces, which belongs to you, as *kings and priests unto God*, (Rev. i. 6.) and is shed abundantly upon you through Jesus Christ, your exalted Saviour, who is by way of eminence *the Holy One*, (Dan. ix. 24. Acts iii. 14. and Rev. iii. 7.) and who, as mediator and head of the church, was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; (John iii. 34. and Acts x. 38.) and in virtue of his death and ascension to heaven, communicates light and grace, according to the measure of his gift, to all his living members: (Eph. iv. 7.) and ye through this spiritual anointing, are led into an experimental and practical knowledge of every thing that is necessary for your preservation from the deceit of these seducers, and for your own eternal salvation.

21. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

21. The reason therefore of my having wrote to you on this head, is not from any suspicion as though ye were unacquainted with the truth of the gospel, and particularly with its grand fundamental doctrine, concerning Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, (ver. 22.) which your unction supposes ye cannot be ignorant of; but the reason of my writing is to remind you of, and still further confirm and establish you in the truth, which I do with the greatest pleasure and confidence of success, because ye already know, believe and prize it; and are well assured that nothing contrary to it can be true, and that no fraud, deceit, or error, like what these impostors go into, can proceed from it, or be consistent with it, but is as contrary to the pure gospel, as any lie can be to truth itself.

22. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

22. Who, of all others, is to be deemed an impostor, cheat and false teacher, but he who denies our Lord Jesus to be come in the flesh, (See the note on chap. iv. 3.) as the true Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, and he declared himself to be, with the attestation of miracles to confirm it, and whom God his Father publicly owned as such? (Matth. iii. 17.) That man is to be looked upon, as one that directly opposes Christ, and deservedly bears the name of antichrist, who, notwithstanding all this strong and complicated evidence, denies the Father, as the Father; and the Son, as the Son; and denies that God the Father has sent him into the world as the promised Messiah, and his beloved son.

23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath

23. Whoever he be that denies the divine personality and mediatorial office of the only begotten Son of God

not the Father:  
but he that op-  
knowledgeth the  
son, hath the  
Father also.

God, (chap. iv. 9, and John i. i. 14.) he denies, not only the Father's testimony to him, as the Messiah, but also, by consequence denies the Father's divine relation to him as the Son: and so takes away the distinguishing personal characters of both; and the peculiar glory which belongs to them respectively in the economy of salvation, and has not a true knowledge of the Father, nor a saving interest in him. \* But, on the contrary, he who cordially owns, believes and confesses the Son to be a divine person, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, believes and owns that he is the eternal Son of the Father, and was sent by him; and so has a due regard, and pays suitable honour both to the Father and the Son, (John v. 23.) and has a right knowledge of the Father, and an interest in his special love and favour through the Son.

23 Let that  
therefore abide  
in you, which  
ye have heard  
from the begin-  
ning. If that  
which ye have  
heard from the  
beginning shall  
remain in you,  
ye also shall con-  
tinue in the Son,  
and in the Fa-  
ther.

24. See to it therefore that the true doctrine of Christ concerning his father and himself, be still embraced by you, and fixed as an abiding principle in your hearts, even that doctrine, which ye have been instructed in from the very first publication of the gospel to you. If ye continue to hold that fast, and retain it as the engrafted word of God, which ye heard and received at your first acquaintance with the gospel, ye shall prove to be, not merely Christians by visible profession, but shall also abide by faith and love in union and communion with the Son, and with the Father through him, to your complete salvation.

25 And this  
is the promise  
that he hath pro-  
mised us, even  
eternal life.

25. And the grand comprehensive promise, to which all others tend, and in which they shall finally issue, and which Jesus Christ, and the Father through him, has made in the gospel, and will certainly fulfil to us, who thus abide in the Father and Son, is no less than an everlasting life of all perfection and glory, which shall be enjoyed in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, and in the most intimate beatific union and communion with them, all blissful and transporting!

26 These things  
have I written  
unto you con-  
cerning them  
that seduce you.

26. I thought it proper to give you these hints about, and to establish, comfort, and fortify you against persons of an antichristian-spirit, that have already rose up among you, and are endeavouring by subtle and deceitful artifices to corrupt your principles and practice, and to draw you away from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor. xi. 3.)

27. But

#### N O T E.

\* The last part of this verse, which stands in different characters, is wanting in most Greek copies, but is supplied from some others of good credit, and from several versions; and is reasonably

supposed to have been dropt through carelessness where it is left out, rather than foisted into the text by a wickedly designed interpolation. Vide Bez. Est. and Mill. in loc.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you: But as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is life; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness, is born of him.

27. But I need not insist so largely upon these things as I otherwise might, because that unction, (ver. 20.) consisting of the gifts and graces of the spirit, which ye have been favoured with, remains as a constant principle within you, to enlighten, guide, and govern you; so that there is no necessity of your being instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God, (Heb. vi. 1.) by any man whomsoever; \* much less of your being taught by any of these new upstarts, that would carry you off from the pure gospel of Christ: but as this holy unction itself leads you into the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, and is infallibly true, according to the word of God, which is truth, (John xvii. 17.) and has no deceit or falsehood in it, and as it has already been effectual to bring you to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, so by means of its continual influence upon you, ye shall still remain steadfast in Christ, and in the doctrines of his gospel.

28. And now, to conclude what I have to say upon this head, my dear little children, take heed that ye still adhere to Christ, and abide by the pure doctrine of the gospel concerning him, and by your holy profession of his name, that when he shall appear in all his *glory the second time, without sin unto salvation*, (Heb. ix. 28.) we, who have ministered the gospel to you, may have the satisfaction of seeing the happy fruit of our labours among you, and may not be disappointed in our hopes concerning you; and that ye yourselves may have boldness, together with us, before him, and not be confounded in the day of judgement; but may be *our glory and crown of rejoicing*, which will be to your own exceeding joy, *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming* (1 Thet. ii. 19. 20.)

29. This is the hope we have concerning you now; and since (ver. 14.) as we trust, ye have right thoughts of Christ, as the righteous and holy one, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, (Ps. xlv. 7.) and is the author of all righteousness in others, wherever it is found; ye may from thence assuredly conclude with an application to yourselves, that every one, who, like him, is a lover and practiser of those things that are right and ho-

ly

#### N O T E

\* Ye need not that any man teach you cannot be said with a design of excluding the use of ministerial instruction; for the apostle was at this very time giving it to them, (see the note on Heb. viii. 11.) but it either relates to their having no need to be taught the fundamental doc-

trines of the gospel, which they were already well acquainted with; or rather, as I think to their having no need to be taught any doctrines of Christian religion by these false pretenders to it, who industriously set themselves to pervert it.

ly, in imitation of him, and from a principle of faith in, and love to him, is partaker of a divine nature, by his regenerating Spirit, and so is by the new birth, as well as by gracious adoption, (chap. iii. 1.) a child of God, and heir of eternal glory. (Rom. viii. 14—17.)

### RECollections.

How beautifully harmonious is the tendency and design of the gospel, to caution believers against all sin, and to support them under a humbling sense of their former iniquities, and of their present disallowed infirmities! The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and his advocacy founded upon it, are extended to all believing sinners of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews through the whole world, But how vainly do any pretend to have a right knowledge of Christ, or true faith in him for their own salvation, if they cast off a conscientious regard to his commandments! They give the lie to their own profession, and to the truth itself, and have no sincere love to him, which would engage them to a holy imitation of him.—The law of love to his people is, for substance, an old commandment, but, for circumstances, suited to the light and grace of the gospel, is a new one; and whatever any one may pretend to, his loving his Christian brother, or not, is a plain test of his either being truly enlightened, or remaining under the power of darkness. O how happy is their condition, who walk in the light of truth and holiness, whether they be babes, young men, or fathers in Christ! The weakest believer is forgiven all trespasses for Christ's sake, and has a filial affection to God as his Father; the more grown Christian is established in the faith, and has strength from Christ for vanquishing the temptations of the devil and his instruments; and the old experienced Christian is best acquainted with the Antient of Days, and his eternal counsels of wisdom and love. But, alas! What an enemy is the love of this world to the love of God! As far as we are carried away with pleasures, riches, or honours, which are all precarious, empty and perishing, so far are we estranged from the love of God to us; and a predominant love of this world is inconsistent with a true love to him; who cannot be the author of any evil influence that the things of flesh and sense make upon us.—How dangerous are the schemes of men of an antichristian spirit, which has worked in all ages of the church! When professors of Christ's name go into it; this makes it evident that they never were sincere believers; for they would otherwise undoubtedly have persisted in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. But O what a blessed and holy unction of the true Spirit have true believers from their exalted Head and Saviour! By this they are well satisfied about the truth of all the fundamental articles of the gospel, inasmuch that they don't need to be always taught the first rudiments of Christianity; much less to be taught any of its doctrines by false pretenders to it. All that deny Jesus to be the Son of God and the only Saviour, are antichristians, and constructively deny both the Father and Son; but all that cordially believe the doctrine, originally delivered in the gospel concerning these divine persons, have a sure interest in them both. The great promise of eternal life belongs to them; and they, being enabled to persist in their most holy faith, continue in union and communion with Christ, to their own and their faithful pastor's joy and confidence, at his second and most glorious appearing. And they that have such just and impressive sentiments of his purity and holiness, as produce an effectual change upon them in resemblance of him, may certainly conclude that they are partakers of a new and spiritual birth from him, and have the inheritance of children, even unto eternal life.

## C H A P. III.

*The Apostle breaks out into admiration of the love of God in making believers his children, 1. 2. Shews the purifying influence of a hope of seeing Christ, and bearing his likeness, and the inconsistency of pretending to this hope, and living in sin, 3—10. Makes love to the brethren a distinguishing character of real Christians, 11—15. Describes that love by such of its effects, as prove it to a man's own conscience to be sincere, 16—21. And represents the advantage of faith, love, and obedience, 22—24.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**B**Ehold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1. **B**EHOLD, with attention and admiration, gratitude, joy and praise, what an affecting and distinguishing sort of free and transcendent love the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of mercies in and through him, has vouchsafed to us who are born of God, (chap. ii. 29.) that, in the riches of his condescension and grace, he should put such a high honour upon us, who are in ourselves altogether worthless, mean, vile, and contemptible sinners, both by nature and practice, as to adopt us into his family, that we might not only bear the name, but enjoy all the blessings and privileges, which, answerable to our dignity, belong to the regenerated sons of God; (John i. 12, 13.) and might be accounted, owned and dealt with, as such. It need not therefore be wondered at, (ver. 13.) that the men of this world, whose hearts are carnal, and averse to all that is good and holy, don't esteem, affect and own, but rather hate us, who bear his image; because they are ignorant of the true nature of God, and neither approve of, nor acknowledge either the Father, or the Son. (chap. ii. 23.) \*

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it

2. But let them think and speak of us as they will; this beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, is our comfort

## N O T E.

\* As to know often signifies to approve; so not to know signifies to disapprove. (See the notes on Matth. vii. 23. and Rom. viii. 29.) And it knew him not seems to refer to Christ, and the ill treatment he met with in the world, on account of which he said to his disciples. (John xv. 18. 19.) *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but*

*I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.* This is parallel to, and casts a light upon, the passage before us, and in ver. 13. and might probably be in the Apostle's mind now; and in the following verses, which are immediately connected with this, he manifestly speaks of Christ, pointing him out in such a manner, as necessarily leads our thoughts to him. (See the note on chap. ii. 3.)

doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

comfort and glory, that though our natural, and lamented sinful infirmities be great and many, and the figure we make in life be ever so mean and despicable, and they revile and hate us, yet we actually are already the sons of God, not by nature, as our blessed Lord is, nor merely by creation, as the holy angels are; (Job. xxxviii. 7.) but by the special grace of regeneration and adoption, and of marriage-union with his essential Son: and so great is the dignity and happiness of this relation, that it is impossible for us, much more for the men of this world, to conceive what sublime riches, honours and delights we shall hereafter be advanced to, answerable to it. But thus far we know in the light of faith, and by the witness of the Spirit, according to the word of God, that when our glorious Lord himself shall appear the second time to salvation, *we shall appear with him in glory*; (Col. iii. 4.) and shall bear his amiable and illustrious image of light and love, holiness and happiness in our souls; and even our bodies themselves *shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body*: (Phil. iii. 21.) for we shall be admitted to a beatific and transforming vision, *not in a glass darkly, but face to face*; (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) and shall see and enjoy him in his divine and mediatorial glory, as shining forth in his exalted human nature just as he is. (John xvii. 24. see the note on 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

3 And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3. And every believer, who has a well grounded hope of all this, cannot but be influenced by it, while he is in this world, to aim at and endeavour, through divine grace, to attain all possible purity in heart and life, in imitation of, and conformity to him, who is superlatively pure and holy, and will admit of none but holy ones to see his face with comfort. (Heb. vii. 26. and xii. 14.)

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

4. Whoever he be that lives in any known sin, as a wilful evil-doer, or worker of iniquity, (*o peius occupatus*, see the note on ver. 6.) that man not only sinneth against the light, grace, and obligations of the gospel; but, as tho' ye were lawless, goes into a manifest violation even of the moral law, which is holy, just and good: for the strict and proper notion of sin is a deviation from, or contrariety in thought, word, or deed, to the law of God, that unchangeable rule of righteousness, which is a transcript of his holy nature and will; and *where no law is, there is no transgression*. (Rom. iv. 15.)

5. And

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

5. And that the allow'd practice of any sin is utterly inconsistent with good hope of seeing Christ, and being like him, at his second coming, is evident; for ye know from the whole tenor of the gospel, that he was manifested in the flesh at his first appearing, (*in*) to this very end and purpose, that by the sacrifice of himself he might effectually deliver us from the guilt, and, in consequence thereof, from the power, and, at length, from all defilement and inbeing of our sins: and he is, and ever was so absolutely sinless, as to need no expiation for himself, and as to have no fellowship with them that walk in darkness. (chap. i. 6.)

6 Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

6. From hence it plainly follows, that whoever abides in him by vital and influential union and communion with him, as all true believers do, like branches in the vine, (John xv. 5.) doth not deliberately, habitually, presumptuously and willingly sin †: He that sinneth at this rate, has never had any realizing view by faith of him, nor any experimental and saving acquaintance or communion with him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteousness, even as he is righteous.

7. Take heed, my dear children, that no false pretenders impose upon you, and lead you astray from the path of truth and duty: Set it down as a certain conclusion, that he, and he only, who, from principles of faith and love, conscientiously and habitually works righteousness (*ἡ ἀγαθή τὴν δικαιοσύνην*) in his religious behaviour towards God, and upright dealings with men, is both inherently and actively righteous, according to his measure and degree, in imitation of the blessed Jesus, who is the Holy One, (see the paraphrase on chap. ii. 20.) and loves righteousness, as well as spent his whole life on earth in an invariable practice of it.

8 He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the begin-

8. He who works iniquity, as one that makes a trade of it, (see the note on ver. 6.) is under the power and influence of the devil, bears his odious likeness, and doth his will; for that great enemy of God and souls is

#### N O T E.

\* We are not to imagine the apostle's meaning to be, that a true Christian never sins; for this would be to make him directly contradict what he had said chap. i. 8. 9. about deceiving ourselves, if we say we have no sin, and about the duty of confessing our sins, which supposes us to have occasion so to do; and therefore he sinneth not must be understood in some such sense, as is given in the paraphrase; and is sufficiently explained in several other verses of this context, which we render committeth sin, but the expressions in the

Greek (*ἡ ἁμαρτία* and *ἡ ἁμαρτία*) are very strong, and signify committing it as practisers, workers, or doers of it with freedom and choice, like persons who make a trade of it: and it is the very same expression that our Lord used when he said, (John viii. 34) *Whosoever committeth sin (ἡ ἁμαρτία) is the servant of sin*; and our apostle says, ver. 8. *He that committeth sin (ἡ ἁμαρτία) is of the devil*, and ver. 16. *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, (ἁμαρτία οὐκ ἔσται)*



ning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

an old offender, persisting in a course of all iniquity himself, and practising the wicked art of tempting and exciting others to sin, ever since the beginning of the world, when he sinned, and drew other apostate angels into sin, as also our first parents into their horrible defection from God and his law, to the ruin of themselves, and all their natural offspring in their several generations. And this is so directly contrary to every thing said and done, or countenanced by Christ, that he, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, and was made known in his saving office, as sent of the Father to this great end and design, that, by his doctrine, obedience and sufferings unto death, he might dissolve the whole frame of those evil works, sin, misery, and death, natural, spiritual and eternal, which the devil propagates and carries on; that they, who believe in Christ Jesus, and hope to live with him, and to be like him for ever, (ver. 2.) might be delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, and live no longer in it here; and might at length be entirely freed from all its dreadful fruits and effects for ever hereafter.

9. Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin; for his ſeed remaineth in him: and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.

9. The ſum then of what I am ſaying is this; Whoſoever be he that is partaker of a divine nature, by the regenerating Spirit, is no longer a doer or worker of iniquity, like other men, or like the devil, who ſinneth from the beginning: (ver. 8.) For that divine principle of grace, which is infused into him, by means of the incorruptible ſeed of the word, (1 Pet. i. 23.) has an abiding root and reſidence in him, to rule and govern him; and he has ſuch a thorough hatred of all iniquity, that he cannot give himſelf liberty to ſin with deliberation and full conſent, as he uſed to do; (ſee the note on ver. 6.) he cannot love and live in ſin; and when, through temptation, ſurprize, or inadvertence, he at any time falls into it, he cannot but, upon conviction, ſorely repent of it, as David and Peter did, becauſe he, as a child of God, and born of the Spirit, has received a principle of grace, that wills and works in direct oppoſition to all ſin, as ſin; (Gal. v. 17.) much leſs can he ſin upon the ſcore, or by virtue of his being born of God, as though his new birth were a licence for it, or had any tendency towards it.

ſo in this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil: Whoſoever doth not righteousneſs, is not of

10. This therefore is the great diſtinguiſhing difference, by which they who are truly born of God, and ſo become his children, and they who are ſtill under the power of the devil, as their father, to do his works, and live according to his will, (John viii. 44.) are openly diſcovered, known and proved to be ſo reſpectively.

God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12. Not as Cain who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14. We know that we have passed from death

tively. Let people's pretences be what they will, it is certain, that whosoever doth not love, and live in the practice of religion and morality, both which may be included in the notion of righteousness, is not born of God, or partaker of the nature of his children; no more is he who has not a sincere and cordial affection toward his Christian brother, as such.

11. For this is one great part of that practical doctrine, which our blessed Lord committed as a charge to us, his apostles and servants, and which we preached, and ye heard and received from the very first publication of the gospel, relating to what he requires of his disciples and followers, (John xiii. 34. and xv. 12. 17.) that we, who claim relation to him, and interest in him, should maintain a brotherly affection, and discover it in the best manner, and by all suitable endearments and services, one towards another.

12. We are by no means to be like Cain, the first-born of our fallen parents, and among all their descendants the first notorious child of the devil, that eminently wicked and malicious murderer from the beginning of the world; (John viii. 44.) and under the power of whose malignant influence, as he works in the children of disobedience, (Eph. ii. 2.) Cain cruelly murdered his brother Abel. And what was the reason of his contriving and committing that monstrously unlawful and barbarous act of violence against him? Why, truly, it was only because he himself was a wicked wretch, and his services not being duly performed, God rejected both him and them; and because his brother was a righteous man, and his sacrifice, offered with faith in the Messiah's atonement, was good and acceptable in the sight of God, who had a respect to him and his offering, and shewed it in such a manner, as testified that he was righteous. (Gen. iv. 3-8. and Heb. xi. 4. see the note there.)

13. Ye need not therefore wonder, or count it a new or strange thing, my dear brethren, if, as is the case of the present day, the wicked men of this world, who are the seed of the serpent, envy, hate and persecute you, who are the seed of the woman, between whom and them there is an irreconcilable enmity, (Gen. iii. 15.) which soon discovered itself in Cain, (ver. 12.) and has worked ever since in the children of disobedience.

14. We, through grace, are men of a better spirit, and may be very easy under all the hatred of this world, since God himself loves us, (ver. 1.) and since we are translated

unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.

translated from a state of law-condemnation to death into a state of justification to eternal life; and are quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness: We are well assured that this is our happy case, because our hearts are formed unto an affectionate love of all our brethren in the faith, hope and fellowship of the gospel, merely upon this consideration, that they belong to Christ, bear his image, and are beloved of him. Whoever, on the contrary, is not effectually engaged from such principles and motives to love his brother in the profession of the gospel, continues still under the power of spiritual death, and in a state of law-condemnation, and lies exposed to everlasting destruction, which is the second death. (Rev. xx. 14.)

13. Who so ever hateth his brother, is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

15. Let his pretences be what they will, every one who, instead of cultivating this Christian temper toward his brother, indulges wrath, malice, envy and revenge, is guilty of the sin of murdering him in his heart; (Math. v. 21. 22.) and such is the rancour of his malignant spirit, that were it left to take its own course, and had it opportunity, it would as surely carry him on to actual murder itself as Cain's did. (ver. 12.) And ye know, from all that the word of God says, that no person, who is under the power of such a wicked disposition, much less an actual murderer, who either has not time, or not a heart for repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, which are necessary to salvation, (Acts xx. 21.) has any right or title to eternal life, or any principle of spiritual life residing in him, or any saving grace, which is the beginning of, and a means for, and shall continue to, and issue in eternal life.

16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

16. How contrary is this unmerciful temper to that which God the Son has shewn towards us; we may conceive something of the greatness of his compassionate love, from the most transcendent instance that could be given of it; since he, who is the eternal Word, and was made flesh, and so was truly and properly God incarnate. (John i. 1. 14.) has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, (Eph. v. 2.) and freely gave his life a ransom for many. (Math. xx. 28.) And we ought to be so deeply affected with, and influenced by this unparalleled love of Christ, as to stand ready after his example, and in imitation of his love, to expose our own lives, whenever he calls us to it, (as the Apostle Paul did his, Phil. ii. 17.) for encouraging the faith and hope of those holy brethren, that have cost him so much,

and are so dear to him; and for the preservation and safety of those that are eminently serviceable to his church, (as Aquila and Priscilla, laid down their own necks for that great apostle's life. (Rom. xvi. 4.)

17 But whose hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

17. But if, instead of copying after this noble pattern of love, any professor of Christ's name, who, through the bounty of providence, has the conveniencies and comforts of this life, see his neighbour, and especially his Christian brother, in strait and necessitous circumstances, and harden his heart against him; and, like one that has no tenderness or pity for the distressed, will give him no relief, how scandalously short doth he fall of that love, which God requires, and has given the most affecting example of in his Son? How can such an one pretend to an interest in God's love to him, or that the sincere love which God enjoins, and is the author and the object of, and which inclines the heart to a fervent love of the brethren for his sake, has any place in him? (Jam. ii. 15. 16.)

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

18. Let us take heed, my dear children, that our professions of love to our fellow Christians be without dissimulation; (Rom. xii. 9.) that it be not all compliment without any meaning, nor merely kind expressions, without any suitable affection toward them, or doing what we can for their help and comfort in spiritual and temporal concerns; but let it demonstrate itself in acts of beneficence and service as occasions require, and in all offices of substantial friendship, according to our professions, and the true nature of Christian charity.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

19. And by a prevalence of this excellent temper and conduct, we may be well satisfied that God of his own will has begotten us with the word of truth, (Jam. i. 18.) and has brought us to understand, believe, and live under the government of the true principles of the gospel, as sincere Christians; and hereupon we shall be enabled to persuade (πειθομεν) our own hearts, that we have such manifest tokens and fruits of his effectual operation upon us, as will embolden our humble appeal to him for our integrity, in his sight and presence, both now and at the day of judgement, whatever censures the world may pass upon us; and this is a sweet and solid joy that frees us from the stinging reproaches of a self-condemning conscience. (1 Cor. i. 12.)

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

20. For if our consciences, which are the candle of the Lord searching all the inward parts of the belly, (Prov. xx. 27.) witness against, accuse and condemn us for designed or allowed hypocrisy in our professions of love,

love, and of adherence to the truth of the gospel, it is very awful to consider, as we ought, that the heart-searching God is an infinitely higher, more impartial, and *critical* judge of the true state of our case, and is greater in purity and holiness, as well as in power to condemn all iniquity, than our own hearts can be; and it is most dreadful of all to be disapproved of him, whose judgement must and will stand for ever, and who has a perfectly comprehensive knowledge of all things, even of the most secret thoughts and intents of the heart. (1 Kings viii. 39. and Rev. ii. 23.) And therefore he not only confirms the sentence which conscience justly passes in his name, but sees and condemns many things in us, that escape our own observation.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence towards God.

21. But, on the contrary, my dearly beloved, if, while we cannot but be sensible of many lamented imperfections, our own consciences, upon due deliberation, under the enlightenings and witnessings of the Spirit, according to the truth of the gospel, acquit us from all charges of reigning or allowed guile, then, in proportion to our consciousness of this, we may have humble boldness in our claim of God as our God and Father, and in our professions of love to him and our fellow Christians for his sake, and in an appeal to him, like that of Peter, (John xxi. 17.) about the sincerity of our hearts therein; yea, we have (*παρρησία*) a holy freedom, courage and liberty of soul in our fiducial pleas with him.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

22. And what good things soever we sincerely and humbly pray for according to his will, with faith in the name of Jesus, and for right ends, (chap. v. 14. John xiv. 13. 14. and xvi. 23. and Jam. iv. 3.) we are, or in due time shall be partakers of them by his free favour, through his beloved son, as far as he sees may be most for his glory, and best for us: And we, with holy David, (Ps. cxix. 6.) may be humbly confident of this, because, as an evidence of our interest in his favour, we, through the grace bestowed upon us, have an unfeigned respect to all his commandments, and endeavour to do such things as are acceptable and well pleasing in his sight by Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 5.)

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

23. And this is the great commandment of God, which is fundamental to, and comprehensive of all the rest, that we should heartily embrace and trust in his Son Jesus Christ for ourselves, according to the gospel revelation of him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost sinners; and that from this principle of faith in him, as also for proving the truth of it in its

working love, (Gal. v. 6.) we should have, and exercise a cordial affection one towards another, as members together of his mystical body, in obedience to the commandment, which he gave to all his disciples. (John xiii. 34. and xv. 12.)

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us.

24. And whoever is brought to yield a conscientious obedience to all his commandments, from a principle of faith as working by love, which counts none of them grievous, (chap. v. 3.) he really doth, and hereby makes it evident that he doth live in a state of vital union with him, and with the Father through him, and that Christ dwells in his heart by faith, who is a habitation of God through the Spirit; (Eph. ii. 22. and iii. 17.) and we who stand in this near and happy relation to Christ, and to the Father through him, are assured that he lives with abiding influence in us, by the light, energy and witness of the Holy Spirit, which he has freely given us, to produce, excite, and assist an exercise of faith and love, and every other grace in our souls.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Who can sufficiently admire, and be affected with the love of God in making such contemptible, ill-deserving creatures as we are, his children by special grace! Though the men of this world despise and hate them, they are already the Sons of God. And who can conceive the dignity and delights which they will be advanced to, when they shall see Christ in all his glory, and be made as like as possible to him! O the happiness of a well-grounded hope of this for ourselves, and of an experience of its purifying effects upon us! There appears in the holy turn that is given to our hearts and lives by a principle of grace, which works in direct opposition to all iniquity, and excites us to all the duties of piety toward God, and righteousness toward men, and to an imitation of the righteous and holy Jesus, who was himself absolutely sinless, and was manifested in our nature to take away our sin, and to destroy the works of the devil, that wicked offender, murderer and promoter of sin and ruin from the beginning of the world.—Of all the divine commandments, faith and love are the chief; faith as working by love; and love as taking pleasure in keeping every other commandment. And how important is it, that, from these noble principles, we affectionately love our Christian brethren, as such, and that not in word only, but in deed and in truth, even unto a readiness, if need be, to lay down our lives for their preservation and confirmation in the faith, as Christ, who was truly and properly God incarnate, laid down his own life in his matchless love for our redemption! By these distinguishing characters, and by his Spirit given to us, we may know that we are passed from death to life, and that he abides in us, and we in him; and may be humbly confident toward God, that we have a saving acquaintance with the truth of the gospel; that we are sincere in our profession of it, and are born of God; and that he, in his own time and way, will give us whatsoever we ask of him according to his will. But, alas! How vain are all pretences to these glorious privileges and blessings, if none of the foregoing dispositions, but the contrary prevail in us! If we habitually live in a course of any known sin as evil-doers; if we are not practisers of righteousness, and, instead of loving, hate the children of God, and that because they are more righteous and holy than ourselves; and,

and, instead of having bowels of compassion toward them, or relieving their wants, we could willingly persecute them even unto death, as Cain did his righteous brother Abel. How can we pretend to have any love to God; or that we are his sons, born of him, or have any true knowledge of him, or any principle of spiritual and eternal life, which no murderer in heart, much less in fact, can have in him? No, no, Let not any man deceive us: These things evidently mark out the children of the devil, in distinction from the children of God, and all such continue under the power of spiritual death, in opposition to them that have eternal life. How much therefore doth it concern every one of us to inquire, in which of these ranks we stand? Whether our consciences acquit, or condemn us in the judgment they pass, upon serious deliberation about our own state, temper and way before God? And O how careful ought we to be in forming that judgement concerning ourselves, since the infinitely great and holy God, who knows our hearts, is the supreme judge of all; and by his judgement we must stand or fall for ever!

## C H A P. IV.

*The Apostle cautions believers against giving heed to every one that pretends to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the true from the false claimants of it, 1—6. Then returns to his darling topic of brotherly love, as a proper characteristic of sincere Christians, enforcing it upon them by various weighty considerations, 7—21.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**B**eloved, be-  
lieve not e-  
very spirit, but  
try the spirits  
whether they  
are of God: be-  
cause many false  
prophets are  
gone out into  
the world,

1. **T**AKE heed, dearly beloved, to whom God has given his spirit, (chap. iii. 24.) that ye hearken not to, and be not seduced by every pretender to the Spirit of God, nor by every doctrine, (ver. 2. 3.) that he broaches under colour of extraordinary light and immediate revelation; but, before ye give any credit to, and fall in with those that make such high professions, carefully examine, and prove, by the touchstone of the word, (1sa. viii. 20.) what manner of spirit they are of, and are influenced by, and what doctrines they preach; whether they carry plain tokens of their being such, as are agreeable to the holy nature and revealed will of God, and derive their original from him or not. And there is great need of your being very cautious on this head; because there are swarms of impostors at this day, who, according to our Lord's prediction, are gone abroad, and make a great noise in the world, endeavouring (if it were possible) to deceive the very elect. (Matth. xxiv. 24.)

2 Hereby know  
ye the Spirit of  
God: Every spi-

2. Now, to give you a certain mark, whereby ye may know who are taught and inspired by the Spirit of God, and who are not, but are acted by a spirit of delusion

rit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.

delusion, or would fallaciously impose upon you; it is necessary for you to observe, that every one, who, under professions of preaching by the light and inspiration of the Spirit, cordially believes, freely owns, and boldly professes his faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the eternal Word, who is God, and the only begotten of the Father, and has actually been made flesh and dwelt amongst us, (John i. 1, 14. see the notes there) \* and came into an incarnate state to fulfil all righteousness, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and is to be entirely trusted in, as the only true Messiah, for eternal life; such an one really is what he professes to be, and speaks by the authority and inspiration of God according to his mind and will, and is himself born of God.

9 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.

3. And, on the contrary, every pretender to preach by the inspiration of the Spirit, that do not believe and own, but denies that Jesus Christ is the only true Messiah, who as the eternal Son of God has assumed a real human body, as well as reasonable soul, and taken upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death (Phil. ii. 7, 8.) for the redemption of his people, such an one is neither sent nor approved of God, nor enlightened by his Spirit, nor born of him; and the spirit by which he is governed, is that very spirit of opposition to Christ and his gospel, concerning which ye have heard from our Lord and his apostles, as has been already hinted, (chap. ii. 18. see the paraphrase there) that it would rise and shew itself in the last days; and it has now actually begun to appear and work in the world among the impostors of this day.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

4. But ye, my dear children, are born of God, and are taught by the unction which ye have received from the Holy One, even by the spirit which he has given you, (chap. ii. 26. 27. and iii. 24.) that ye might not be carried away by their delusions; and ye have been enabled to withstand these impostors, and their errors in doctrine and practice, and to gain a noble conquest over them, by the steadfastness of your faith, profession, and

#### N O T E,

\* Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, may never as a *synonym* *ἡνὶς Ἰησοῦς ἐν σαρκὶ ἐγέννητο* might be more justly rendered every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ, who has come in the flesh, and to Christ himself is the subject of the confession in all his characters, and not barely that particular assertion, that he is come in the flesh, which I take to be only such a

description of him, as is indeed essential to, and included in, though it be not the whole of what is to be confessed concerning him: And they, who, on the contrary, deny that Christ came to offer up himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and make atonement for sin, do, in effect, deny him to be come in the flesh for the main purpose for which God, his Father, sent him.



and obedience; and ye will still be more than a match for them all, because he who dwells in you by his spirit, is infinitely superior, in wisdom and power to that antichristian spirit which is gone forth into the world, and to satan himself, under whom it acts, and who works in the children of disobedience. (Eph. ii. 2.)

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

5. These deceivers that think, talk and act under his influence, are men of carnal minds, who walk according to the course of this world; (Eph. ii. 2.) whose views and interests are all of a temporal nature, relating to the riches, honours and pleasures of this present evil world, they therefore propagate such notions of secular dominion and grandeur under the Messiah, as are agreeable to men of a like worldly temper with themselves; and unregenerate people, who place their happiness in the things of this world, hearken to them, and greedily suck in their corrupt doctrines, as being most suitable, of all others, to their own sensual inclination and taste.

6 We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of error.

6. But we, who preach an incarnate and crucified Saviour, are enlightened, approved, sent and owned, as well as born of God; and therefore every one that truly knows any thing of God, and is well affected toward him, according to the discoveries he has made of himself in Christ by the gospel, diligently attends to, and heartily embraces the divine truths, which we have received by revelation from him. But he that is not born of God, by his enlightening and renewing influence, pays no regard to the spiritual doctrine we deliver concerning Christ, as the only true Messiah, who is come in the flesh; (ver. 3.) nor will believe or adhere to us who preach it. This is a distinguishing character, whereby we may easily and clearly discern on one hand, the spirit of truth and its preachers, and on the other, the spirit of falsehood and delusion, and what an evil spirit they are under the power of who propagate antichristian errors, and wicked practices according to them.

7 Beloved, let us love one another. for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

7. Now, to return to what I greatly aim at in this epistle, let it be our diligent care, beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, to maintain, express and shew forth the most sincere and brotherly affection one towards another; for this excellent grace is the fruit of the Spirit, the birth and offspring of God himself, who begets, commands, and approves of it. And every one that cultivates and exemplifies this amiable principle, is a child of God, regenerated by his Spirit; and has an experimental, appropriating and transforming know-  
ledge

ledge of the perfections and will of God, and particularly of his love.

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

8. He, on the contrary, that is a stranger to this Christian love, is unacquainted with the nature and will of God. For God \* is all love, he is the perfection of it in its propensions, thoughts, purposes, and dispensations of every kind, as though he were nothing but love toward his children, and in his will to promote a like affection in them to one another: He therefore is a complete pattern of it, worthy of our imitation, though it is absolutely impossible for us to come up to any thing near an equality to him in it, as appears, if we only consider the following eminent demonstration of it.

9 In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

9. The astonishing, self-moving, and condescending love of the great God to us broke out, and was displayed with the brightest and most affecting evidence in this matchless instance of it, namely, that in the fulness of time, God, according to his eternal purpose of love and grace, sent forth his own divine and only begotten Son, in a way of special operation, into this lower world, to assume human nature into personal union with himself, or to be made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, (Gal. iv. 4. 5.) that through his merit and righteousness we, who believe in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life. (John iii. 16.)

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

10. In this there really was, and most evidently appeared to be unparalleled love, not to friends, or persons lovely in themselves, but to enemies, sinners, and ungodly wretches, (Rom. v. 6. 8. 10.) not from any consideration or foresight of previous love in us toward him to move him to it, but from his own mere undeserved and preventing love and grace, by which he was beforehand with us, (ver. 19.) and, in the greatness of that love, he sent his own supremely beloved and only begotten Son to bleed, suffer and die in our nature and stead, and thereby make an effectual atonement, to the full satisfaction of divine justice, for our great and multiplied offences, which otherwise must have been charged and punished upon us to our eternal destruction,

11. How

#### N O T E.

\* God is often styled holy, righteous, wise, powerful, true and faithful, and the like; but I do not recollect that he is ever said, in the abstract, to be holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, &c. as he is said to be love, which may in-

timates that this is the darling and reigning attribute that sheds a most amiable glory upon all his other perfections, and upon all his designs and performances with regard to his people.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

11. How great, ye dearly beloved of God and me, are the constraints of this love! If God loved us at so high and an astonishing a rate as this, we, whom he thus loved, and redeemed by the precious blood of his Son, most certainly ought, in imitation of him, and as influenced by his superlative love, to keep up the most ardent affection one towards another, as Christian brethren, for his sake, and in obedience to his commandment. {ver. 21.}

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

12. God himself is an invisible spirit, whom no man has seen, or can see with bodily eyes, (1 Tim. vi. 16.) to move his affection to him; but the objects of his love, who bear his holy image, are visible, daily seen and conversed with, that we might be induced to testify our love to him, by shewing it for his sake to them. (See ver. 20.) If therefore we love one another, as children of his own likeness, that is a proof of our love to him, and it hereby appears that he dwells in us by his Spirit to produce this love; and both his love to us has hereby manifested itself, and attained its end and design to a good degree in us; \* and our love to him is hereby brought to its true form, and exercised with eminence, and is proved to be sincere in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us because he hath given us of his Spirit.

13. By this we have a comfortable evidence of a mutual inhabitation between God and us; of our dwelling by faith and love in union and communion, through Jesus Christ, with him; and of his dwelling by gracious manifestations and influences in our souls; because he has freely afforded us rich communications of his Spirit to beget and animate this faith and love, and to cast a light upon his own work in us.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

14. And we, the apostles of Christ, have seen him with our bodily eyes (chap. i. 1.) in his human nature, preaching and miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension to glory; and we now bear witness, upon infallible evidence, that the eternal Father has actually sent his only begotten Son, to take upon him our nature; and by the course of obedience and sufferings, which in that humble state he fulfilled, to be the Redeemer

#### N O T E.

\* His love (αγαπη αυτου) may be considered either subjectively for the love that is in him to us, or objectively, for the love we have in him, (see the note on chap. ii. 15.) but which ever way we take it, his love being perfected in us is not to be understood, as though either his love to us, or ours to him, had in this world completely attained all its ends, and produced the whole of its ef-

fects; but both his love and ours may be said to be perfected in us, much after the same manner as his strength is said to be made perfect, or manifested with great advantage in our weakness, (2 Cor. xii. 9.) and as faith is said to be made perfect, or demonstrated to be sincere, genuine and eminent, by works. (James ii. 22.)

deemer and Saviour of both Jews and Gentiles, that do, or ever shall believe in him throughout the world, (see the note on John iii. 16.) according to ancient prophecies, that *the desire of all nations should come*, (Hag. ii. 7.) and that *in him all nations of the earth should be blessed*. (Gen. xxii. 18.)

15 Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

15. Whoſoever therefore ſhall, from a principle of faith, which works by love, boldly own and declare his belief with full aſſent and conſent, in the face of all oppoſition and danger, in theſe perilous days, that Jeſus is this eminently peculiar Son of God, and the only Saviour of ſinners, it is thereby manifeſt that God dwells in him by his Spirit, which has led him into theſe juſt and exalted ſentiments of Chriſt, with a firm adherence to him; and that he dwells in God by faith and love, through the great mediator.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God is in him.

16. And we, who are bleſſed with an experience of this, have been well aſſured, and fully perſwaded, on the foot of the goſpel-revelation, and the concurring witneſs of the Spirit with our ſpirits, that the moſt peculiar, tranſcendent, free and diſtinguiſhing love is in the heart of God towards us, and is manifeſted by his *ſending his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins, that we might live through him*. (ver. 9. 10.) by this it plainly appears, as has been obſerved, (ver. 8. ſee the note there) that God is all love to us, and there is no fury in him againſt us; and we may certainly conclude from thence, that whoever lives under the power of a hearty love to him, and to his children for his ſake, is ſo aſſimilated to the God of love, as to abide in a reciprocal union and communion with him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldneſs in the day of judgement; becauſe as he is, ſo are we in this world.

17. By our thus dwelling in love, it is evidently proved to be ſincere and of conſiderable ſtrength; (ſee the note on ver. 12.) and it having this plain token of God's love to us, we may aſſuredly hope to appear with humble confidence before him, as true believers, in the awful day of judgement; becauſe as he is all love to us ſo we in reſemblance of him, and in conſideration of his love are filled with a ſupreme love to him, and with a ſincere and ardent love to the brethren for his ſake, even while we live in this tempting and enſnaring world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love caſteth out fear; becauſe fear hath torment: he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.

18. This love is of ſuch a delightful nature, that though it be ever attended with a holy filial reverence of God, and cautious fear of offending him; yet, as we thereby know that we have paſſed from death to life, (chap. iii. 14.) there is no diſtruſtful, deſpairing, or terrifying fear of God in it, as if he were our enemy; but

a sincere love to him, and to fellow-Christians for his sake, especially when it is exalted to its highest pitch and fervour, under an assuring sense of his love to us, banishes all diffident, slavish fear of God: because this sort of fear is a most distressing passion, utterly inconsistent with a prevailing sense of his love, and with the sweetness, pleasure and confidence of a complacential love to him. It is a plain consequence from hence, that he who has a servile dread of God, as an enemy, is far from living under the power of that delightful love, which springs from faith, and considers him as a reconciled God and father in Christ, and as the most amiable object, infinitely lovely in himself, and all love to us, (ver. 16.)

19 We love him; because he first loved us.

19. Our love to him is kindled by, and is the fruit and effect of his own free love to us. He was first in his love to us, which eternally delighted in all his thoughts, schemes and purposes of glorifying himself in our recovery and salvation by his Son, and which is the original cause and pattern of all our love to him; and the manifestations of his love to us, and our sense of it and reflections upon it, are the powerful motives of ours again to him; our hearts having before been alienated from him, and never would have been in love with him, had he not first loved us, and given us some discoveries of it to induce our love to him again.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

20. This love to God is so inseparably connected with love to his children, that if any one pretends to say, I love God, and at the same time bears an uncharitable, irreconcilable and malicious temper toward his Christian brother, he acts inconsistently with, and gives the lie to his own profession, and to all that the holy Scriptures say about sincere love to God, which includes a love to all that bear his image and belong to him: for whoever he be that has not a cordial affection to his brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, whom he has seen with his bodily eyes, in whom he may also see visible traces of the image of God, and who is an object daily presented to his senses, to raise his esteem of him, and move his compassion and kindness to him, as occasions require; how is it likely, or even possible, that he should heartily love God, who is invisible to mortal eyes, and makes no impression of himself upon the external senses, to affect the heart and engage its love to him, which can never be sincere without a conscientious respect to all his commandments? (see chap. v. 3.)

21. And

20. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.

21. And this is one great and summary commandment, which we have received from him, as ye have heard, (chap. iii. 23.) and which he has given us in the moral law, and with further explications and enforcements by Jesus Christ in the gospel, (Matth. xxii. 37—39. and John xv. 12. 17.) that he, who sincerely loves God, should also love his Christian brother, who bears his Father's image, and is dear to him; and should make it appear by this, that he doth indeed unfeignedly love God.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a certain test have private Christians, as well as others, in the word of God, to distinguish between those that broach errors concerning the divine person and saving offices of Christ, under pretence of their having the Spirit of God; and those that, under his guidance and influence, preach the truth as it is in Jesus, and cordially own, and bravely profess, that he is the only begotten Son of God, and has really appeared in human nature as the Saviour of lost sinners among both Jews and Gentiles! All pretenders to the Spirit are not of God, nor are to be believed and followed; and they that are born of God need not to be stumbled at them, since there ever have been such in the world; and true believers are enabled to see through them and their delusions, and to withstand and overcome them; because God, who dwells in them by his Spirit, is infinitely greater, wiser and stronger than the devil, who works and prevails by his antichristian emissaries, upon carnal men. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should adhere to them, who are like themselves, and accommodate their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste? But the servants of God speak from, and for him, according to his mind and will: and therefore are suitably regarded by those, and those only that are well affected in their hearts toward him.—How astonishing is the free love of God toward such sinful creatures as we are, that he (as his inspired servants testify) has sent his best beloved Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live in all blessedness and glory for ever with him! This is a high demonstration indeed, that God is love; and we must be utter strangers to his amiable excellencies, if we don't love him: Not that we are or can be before-hand with him in loving; for we love him, because he first loved us, and because we are brought, under his influence and manifestation, to know and believe it. This melts our hearts and gains over our affections to him, and to his children for his sake. And what a sure token is this of our being born of God; and of his dwelling by his Spirit in us, and of our union and communion with him, as those whom he loves! But how vain and preposterous is it, for any to pretend that they have a true and hearty love to that God, whom they never saw, if they have enmity in their souls against those in whom his image is visible, and whom they often see and converse with! This is giving the lie to their own profession, and to the declarations of God in his word, who has commanded that he who loves him, should love his brother also. And when love to God and one another is genuine and abounding, how sweet are its workings! It banishes all slavish tormenting fear of him and of his wrath, which is inconsistent with an affectionate love to him, and to his children as such. But having this evidence of our interest in his love, with what satisfaction may we hope to appear before him with humble boldness in the day of judgement, as those that are accepted of him through his Son.

## C H A P. V.

*The Apostle concludes his argument for brotherly love, by shewing that it is the effect of a new birth, which produces such a love to God, as makes obedience to all his commandments pleasant, and such a faith in Christ, as overcomes this world, 1—5. Then, to establish their faith in Christ, he refers to three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, as concurring to prove that Jesus, the Son of God, is the true Messiah, 6—9. Shews the satisfaction that the believer has in his own soul about him, and eternal life through him, and about God's hearing and answering the prayers that are offered up according to his will, for ourselves and others, 10—17. And concludes with an account of the happy condition of true believers beyond the rest of the world, and with a charge to renounce all idolatry, 18—21.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

1 **W**Hosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also: for that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

1 **N**OW, to close the argument about brotherly love, which has been so much insisted upon in this epistle, ye ought seriously to consider, that whosoever in his very heart believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and has accordingly an intire dependence upon him, as the anointed prophet, priest and king of the church, for all salvation, is regenerated by the Spirit of God: and every one who, from this principle of faith, as a supreme love to God, in his esteem of him, desire after him, and delight in him, *who of his own will begat us with the word of truth,* (James i. 18.) cannot but likewise bear a good will to, and take pleasure in his Christian brother, merely because he is beloved of God, and bears his image, as one that is spiritually begotten of him.

2. It is a plain token, by which we know that we love the children of God, with a genuine Christian love, merely on account of their religion and likeness to him, when it proceeds from such a prevailing love to God himself, as inclines and engages us sincerely to endeavour, by his grace, to live in all holy obedience to his commandments, relating to this and every other duty.

3. For this is the true and distinguishing characteristic of an unfeigned and governing love to God; and this is the test, proof and evidence of its being so, and is its proper tendency and effect, that it determines us to have an impartial respect to all his commandments: (Ps. cxix 6.) and this sweetly constrains us to pay a con-

conscientious obedience to them, without picking and chusing, or counting any of them (*βαρυναι*) a heavy burden or grievous task; but attending to them all, as comprehended in the great law of love, with freedom and delight. (see *Matth. xi. 29. 30.*)

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith.*

4. For whosoever is born again by the regenerating operation of the Spirit of God, he himself, and (*καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα*) all that new nature which is born or produced in him, gets above the terrors and allurements of the men and things of this world, and even triumphs over them, so as not to be disheartened or driven away by the one, or drawn aside by the other, from his duty toward God: and the noble conquest, which we, of this character, obtain over every thing of this world, that would obstruct or interfere with our love and obedience to God, is not by any power of our own, but by the strength we derive from Christ, thro' faith in him, whereby we trust in him and in God through him, and have realizing and assuring views and hopes of an incomparably higher happiness in the world to come, than 'tis possible for us to lose in this. (*Heb. x. 34. and xi. 1.*)

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

5. Who is there of all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile, that ever hath obtained such a victory over this world, and is so far dead to every thing in it, as not to be cooled in his affections toward God, nor alienated in heart or life from him, by any of its frowns or smiles? Where is the man that has attained to this, but the Christian, who in his very soul believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and the only begotten Son of God, and depends upon him by a lively and effectual faith as such for justification, sanctification and complete salvation?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even Jesus Christ*; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

6. This true and only Messiah, even Jesus the anointed Saviour, is he who came into our world with a commission from his heavenly Father to fulfil the work of redemption, which was divinely testified, not only by his coming with water at his baptism, (*Matth. iii. 16.*) but also with water and blood at his death, when the writer of this epistle particularly observed, that both water and blood came forth from his pierced side, intimating, in a symbolical way, the purification which was brought in by him from the defilement and guilt of sin, according to what was typified by legal washings with water, and with blood of expiatory sacrifices. (see the note on *John xix. 34. 35.*) And his character was afterwards attested by the holy Spirit, in applying the virtue of his death to the consciences of believers for producing both these effects, as well as in glorifying Christ,



Christ, by shewing his things to them, and enabling his servants to work innumerable miracles in his name; and we may depend upon the witness which the Holy Spirit, in this practical and effectual manner, bore to Christ, because he is, by way of eminence, the Spirit of truth. (John xiv. 17.)

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

7. For there are three divine persons, the habitation of whose glory is in heaven, that bear their united testimony to the incarnate Saviour from thence. The first is God the Father, who said of Christ at his baptism and transfiguration, (Matth. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.) *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; and (Rom. i. 4.) *declared him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*: the second is the eternal uncreated Word himself, who ever was God with the father; (See the note on John i. 1.) and said, *I and my Father are one*; (John x. 30.) and often asserted his office, as well as divine character in the plainest terms, and appealed for the truth of it to the miracles which he wrought by his own power, and particularly to his raising himself from the dead: (John ii. 19.) the third of these heavenly witnesses is the Holy Spirit, who gave abundant attestations to our blessed Lord, as the only Saviour, by his visible descent upon him at his baptism, (Luke iii. 22.) and by his coming from the exalted Messiah in heaven to bear witness to him, and to spread his name, kingdom and glory in the world. And these three heavenly witnesses, though personally

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# NOTE

⑥ It would be to little purpose to trouble the common English reader with the disputes that critics, especially of later ages, have raised about the genuineness of this verse. The learned may consult Mill. in loc. where the Doctor gives the fullest and fairest account I have any where met with, of the places that are urged from ancient copies, versions and quotations, on both sides of the question; from the whole of which he concludes, that the arguments brought for the authority of the text seem to him to be so strong, that it ought by no means to be drop'd, and several rational evidences to support the authenticity of it may be seen in Mr John Reynold's continuation of Mr Henry's exposition, where he makes most of the following observations, with which I have intermixed a few others. If we drop this verse, and join the 8th to the

6th, it looks too like a tautology, and the beauty and propriety of the connection is lost, as may appear to any that attentively read the 6th and 8th verses together, leaving out the 7th; and they don't give us near so noble an introduction of the witnesses, as our present reading doth; nor makes the visible opposition to some witness or witnesses elsewhere, as is manifestly suggested in the words, *And there are three that bear witness in earth*, ver. 8. But all stands in a natural and elegant order, if we take in the 7th verse, which is very agreeable, and almost peculiar to the stile and sentiments of our Apollie, who, of all others, delights in these titles, *the Father and the Word*, and who is the only sacred writer that records our Lord's words, in which he speaks of *the Spirit's testifying of him*, and *glorifying him by receiving of his things and shewing*

personally distinct in a manner that infinitely transcends all our ideas, are essentially one divine being, one thing (*ὁ θεός*) or one God, in distinction from, and in opposition to all nominal or pretended deities, which by nature are no gods. (Col. iv. 8.)

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one,

8. And in concurring testimony with these three divine persons in heaven, who subsist in the unity of the Godhead, and have given their distinct attestations to the saving office of Christ, \* there are three practical witnesses to the same upon earth. One of these lies in the miraculous gifts and saving graces of the Holy Spirit: another is the spotless purity of Christ's human nature and life, (Heb. vii. 26.) and his holy doctrine, by means of which the souls of believers are sanctified, and cleansed, as it were, with clean water, (John xvii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 22. and Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) as was signified, not only by John's baptism, which pointed to Christ for this benefit; (Matth. iii. 11.) but also by our Lord's own institution of the standing ordinance of Christian baptism in the name of the sacred three, which is a solemn and holy dedication of the baptised to the Son, together with the Father and the holy Ghost: and the third of these witnesses is *the blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins*, as represented in the Lord's supper, (Matth. xxvi. 28.) and applied to *purge the consciences of true believers from dead works*

to

#### N O T E.

ing them to his disciples, and says, *I and my Father are one.* (John x. 30. xv. 26. and xvi. 14.) The trinitarians therefore had less occasion to interpolate this verse, than the antitrinitarians had to take it out of the sacred canon, if any, on either side, can be supposed to be so very wicked as to make such an attempt; and it is much more likely that some transcriber might, through the similitude of the beginning of the 7th and 8th verses, or through some obscurity in the writing of that part of his copy, carelessly slip over the 7th, than that any should be so daring as designedly to add it to the text: and it can scarce be thought that the Apostle, in representing the foundation of the Christian faith, and the various testimonies that were given to Christ, should omit the supreme testimony; and yet with a reference to the before recited witnesses should add, ver. 9. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, though, according to the *Arian* sense of the 8th verse, no immediate

witness of God had been mentioned before, if we leave out the 7th verse. (See some of these, and such like thoughts, more at large in Mr Reynolds. See also Dr Hammond on the place.)

\* The whole context shews that the witness here given to Christ relates most immediately to his character as the great Messiah, or incarnate Son of God, and therefore he, as the Word, denoting his divine nature, under which he is mentioned as a witness to this character, ver. 7. is as proper a witness of it as either the Father or the Spirit; and I take the Spirit in this verse to relate, not to his personal attestation to this character of Christ, which he gave as one of the witnesses in heaven, ver. 7. but to his gifts and graces, since that which is born of the Spirit is called Spirit; (John iii. vi.) and these witness to Christ on earth, as they appear, and evidently operate in, and by the subjects of them on earth, in confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel concerning him.

to serve the living God. (Heb. ix. 14.) And these three, though they be not one in nature or essence, nor are to be considered under personal agency, as the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost are; yet they harmoniously agree, (1st to 19.) unto the bearing of one and the same practical testimony among themselves on earth, and with the adorable three in heaven, as to Christ's being the divine, complete and only Saviour of sinners.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.

9. Now if, according to what is written in the law of God, we readily admit of, and depend upon the testimony of two or three credible witnesses among men, (Deut. xvii. 6. and xix. 15. and Matth. xviii. 16.) and they are judged sufficient to determine all controversies about human affairs in any court of judicature; we may be much more sure that the infallible testimony of God the Father, Son and Spirit in heaven, as well as of those three other witnesses, by divine appointment, on earth, ought to be unquestionably and absolutely depended upon: for this is the testimony of that God who cannot lie, and who in these various ways has given it concerning his only begotten and eternal Son, with regard to his being the true Messiah.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

10. Whosoever, upon all this divine evidence, cordially believes and trusts in the incarnate Son of God, as the only true and all-sufficient Saviour, he has, by the light and influence of the Spirit, embraced this witness of God, and has an experimental and satisfying testimony in his own soul of the suitableness, worth and excellency of Christ; of his ability and willingness to save him; and of his being authorized and every way qualified to deliver him from the guilt and power of his sins, and from all the miseries they had entailed upon him, and to conduct him safe to heavenly glory. On the contrary, whosoever, through unbelief, rejects the testimony of God concerning Christ and salvation alone by him, he flatly contradicts the truth of what God has said about him, and so, in effect, gives the great and holy God the lie; because he does not assent and consent to, and rely upon the plain and positive testimony, (πρὸ μαρτυρίας) which he has given by his own witnessing, in the ways above mentioned, to the mediatorial character of his only begotten Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.

11. And this is the sum and substance of the divine testimony, viz. That God the Father, according to the eternal counsel and good pleasure of his will, has, on Christ's account, given to us who believe in him, (ver. 13.) a right and title to, and meetness for, together with the beginnings, earnest and foretastes of

eternal life: and all the felicity of this most excellent life is purchased by, and treasured up and secured in his Son, who, as the head of his body, the church, has all the springs and fulness of it in himself, to communicate to us in the dispensations of grace, which shall issue in all the blessings of eternal glory.

12 He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

12. Hence it plainly follows, that he who is vitally united to, and so has a special interest in the Son of God, as his head and Redeemer, through faith in him, is already spiritually alive, both in a legal and moral sense, and has the whole of everlasting life in title and sure reversion: but he who, through unbelief, rejects the Son of God, and so, according to the gospel constitution, excludes himself from any peculiar relation to, and interest in him as a divine Saviour, continues still to be dead in trespasses and sins, and has no pleadable right or claim to the blessings of eternal life. (John. iii. 36.)

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

13. My design in setting these divine testimonies to Christ in so clear and strong a light before you, who under a sense of your helpless, guilty, lost and ruined state and condition, as sinners against God, heartily receive and depend upon his eternal Son as your only Saviour, is, that ye may be assured, for your comfort, by the witness of the Spirit with, and in your own souls, according to the word, that ye have all the blessedness and glory, included in the notion of an immortal and heavenly life, in title and reversion; and have not only the earnest of it in yourselves, but have the whole of it in Christ your head, who, as such, has taken possession of it for you: and my further view herein is, that ye may be excited still more and more stedfastly, and with all humble and joyful confidence and perseverance to adhere to, and maintain a firm and intire trust in the merit and mediation of the only begotten Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

14. And we, who really believe in him, are not only assured that he will bring us safe to glory, but we have this further satisfaction and holy boldness (*παρρησία*) in our humble addresses to the throne of grace through him, that even while we are in this world of temptation, sin and sorrow, whatever we present our petitions to God for, with faith in Christ's name, after such a manner as is agreeable to his holy will, according to the notices he has given of it in the declarations, precepts and promises of his word, he mercifully attends to, and favourably regards the voice of our supplications. (John xvi. 23. 24. and Jam. i. 5. 6.)

15. And

like the rest of the holy scriptures, was written for our learning, may be considered with an application to any church or body of Christians, and particular persons among them, so far as its subject matter and terms agree to them, as the third epistle to Gaius may, and as what God said personally to Joshua is applied in common to all true believers, Heb. xiii. 5. (see the note there.)

*In this short letter the Apostle salutes the elect lady and her children, 1—3. Expresses his joy in, and further excites their faith and love, 4—6. Cautions them to be upon their guard against deceivers, whom he describes, 7—9. Directs their conduct toward them, 10. 11. And concludes with excusing the shortness of his writing, by a promise, God willing, to make them a visit, and discourse more largely about things, some of which he had touched upon; and with salutations from the children of her elect sister, 12. 13.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**T**HE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth:

**1. JOHN**, who by a far advanced age in nature and Christianity, as well as by his apostolic office, and that of long standing, is the only surviving apostle, and so emphatically the elder of the church of Christ, sends this letter to the noble matron; who is well known to be, not only a person of high birth and figure in the world; but, which is most of all to her honour, an excellent and eminently choice Christian, (see the note on Rom. i. 1.) which carries an evident token of God's having from the beginning chosen her to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; (2 Thess. ii. 13.) and together with her, the writer of this epistle includes her amiable children who are partakers of the same faith with herself; all of whom, mother and children, I sincerely and affectionately love in Christ, who is the Truth, (John. xiv. 6.) and for the sake of their having embraced him and the truth of the gospel; And not only I myself, but all those likewise that have heard of them, and especially that have the honour of their acquaintance, and are themselves enlightened with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and of his true doctrine, (ver 9.) bear a high esteem of them.

a For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever:

**2.** This our affection is of a spiritual nature merely, or chiefly at least, on account of the Lord Jesus who is the truth, and of their harmonious agreement with us in receiving the word of truth, with which God of his own will has begotten us; (Jam. i. 18.) and which, being an incorruptible seed, abides as a true and living principle of faith and holiness in us, and will remain, as such, in our souls all our days upon earth, and then flourish up into eternal life in heaven.

17 All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.

17. It must be owned indeed that all iniquity, (*ἀνομία*) as it is contrary to what is right and just toward God, or man, is a deviation (*ἁμαρτία*) from the holy law of God, and, as such, in strict justice deserves death. But as, under the Jewish dispensation, there were different sorts and degrees of sin, some of which were punished with death without mercy; (Heb. x. 28.) while others admitted of an atonement; (see Lev. chap. iv. v. and vi.) so, under the gospel state, there is a sort of sinning which is not aggravated, like that against the Holy Ghost, or that of utter apostacy, so as to be out of the reach of pardoning grace, though a sincere believer may, through temptation and infirmity, like David, Peter, and others, fall into heinous sins; and therefore it is lawful and a duty to pray, that he who has been guilty of only such sort of sins may be forgiven for Christ's sake, according to God's promise in his covenant to his people. (Heb. viii. 12.)

18 We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

18. We who have received Christ, as the only Saviour, are well assured, both from the word of God, and from the immortal nature of true grace in the heart, and from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost to keep it alive, that whoever is really regenerated by the Spirit of God, is never suffered to commit the unpardonable sin; \* nor doth he with full consent and deliberation persist in the practice of any known iniquity whatsoever; but he who is spiritually begotten of God, and so born again, has an utter detestation of, and abiding contrariety of heart against such ways of sinning; in so much, that by watchfulness and prayer, and by strength derived from Christ, he takes care to keep himself from them; and Satan, that wicked spirit, has no power to influence him in such a manner, as to carry him into a determined opposition to Christ, or course of sinning that shall end in utter apostacy.

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

19. And we are well satisfied that we are so born of God, as to be partakers of a divine nature, which is a powerful and abiding principle of all holiness; and that we are the children of God, in a peculiar relation to him, and side with him; and we know that all the rest

#### N O T E.

\* *Whoever is born of God sinneth not* seems here to relate particularly to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, or to the sin of total apostacy; one or other of which, as I take it, was spoken of ver. 16. and perhaps both may be reduced to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as, in one view, it was found in those who, under all the light of the gospel revelation, never would

own Christ, but always obstinately set themselves against him; and, in another, was chargeable on those who had been enlightened, and made a profession of faith in him; and yet, as the apostle had before spoke of true believers, as those that cannot sin deliberately, and with full consent and approbation. (ch. iii. 6-9 see the note there) That sense is also suggested in the paraphrase.

rest of mankind who are strangers to this new birth, and make up the greatest part of this world, continue voluntarily under the power of sin, and of the wicked one, (*1st to 3rd ver. 18.*) and must be ranked under him as their head and prince, who works in the children of disobedience. (Eph. ii. 2.)

120 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him, that is true even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

20. And, from all the undoubted proofs before insisted on, we certainly know that Jesus, the Son of God, has assumed human nature, and actually come into this lower world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; (Heb. ix. 26.) and we know by our own happy experience, that he has not only given us an external revelation in his word, but has enlightened the eyes of our minds by an internal operation of his Spirit, that we might have a saving knowledge of him who is Truth itself: And we are vitally united to him, who, in all that he has said, is the true and faithful witness, (Rev. i. 5.) even Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God.\* This Jesus, (*ver.*) in his original nature, is the only living and true God together with the Father and Spirit, and our faith in him, who has life in himself, and is the purchaser and giver of spiritual life to us, will certainly issue in eternal life. (John v. 26. and xvii. 3.)

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

21. Upon the whole then, my dear children, whom I as affectionately love as a father doth his tender babes, let all these considerations engage you to abstain from every appearance of fellowship with pagans in their idolatrous worship of false gods, from all use of images, as representations of the deity, or as mediums of worship, and from every idol of your own hearts; and consider Christ as the true God, (*ver. 20.*) that ye may be secured against idolatry in the worship which ye pay to him. So may it be, to his and his Father's honour, and to your own comfort and salvation! In testimony of my desire and hope of its being so, I heartily say, *Amen.*

#### N O T E.

\* To clear up and establish the sense of this passage, as asserting that Christ is the true God here intended, see my sermons on Jesus Christ God-man, page 59. 60.

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How divine, infallibly true, and most certainly, of all others, to be depended upon, are the numerous united testimonies to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Messiah, who is the eternal Son of God, the same in nature and perfections with the Father, and has come into our world for the redemption of lost sinners! As the Father, Son and Spirit (who, though distinct persons, are one divine Being) bore witness to him from heaven; so the graces of the Spirit in the believer's heart, the purifying effects of his death in the washing of regeneration, and the remission of sins through faith in his blood, agree in their testi-

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mony on earth to him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour : And he who, on the credit of this complicated substantial testimony, heartily believes and trusts in the Son of God for all salvation, has an experimental and satisfying witness in his own soul, which sets to its seal that God is true, and dares venture his eternal all upon it. But he who rejects this testimony, through unbelief, gives the lie to the great God himself, the sum of whose testimony is, that he has given to believers eternal life ; and this life is safely treasured up for them in his Son. And O how great is their happiness ! They are born of God, and bear his image as his children, and obtain a noble victory over this world by their faith : they have eternal life in and through Jesus Christ ; and all their prayers of faith are heard and answered for things agreeable to the will of God. What rich provision and encouragement is here for perseverance, with increasing hope and joy, in the lively exercises of their faith ! Though there be still remainders of sin in them, they cannot deliberately and wilfully go into the practice of any iniquity ; but are under the government of that love to God, which engages them sincerely to love his children, because they are begotten of him after his own likeness, and to take pleasure in keeping all his commandments. Every transgression of the law, is by its sentence, and in strict justice, worthy of death ; but none of them is so great, as not to admit of pardon through faith in the Son of God, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which includes total apostacy in those who once made a profession of Christ, and is utterly inconsistent with true faith in him ; and so shall never be forgiven. But there is room for prayer, and hope of recovery for any that have not yet committed this sin, which no true believers can ever fall into : For they being born of God, and united to Christ, are under efficacious influence to secure them against the devil's ever being able to draw them into that unpardonable sin. But all the unregenerate part of the world remain under the power of sin and Satan, whom they, as servants, willingly obey : and they must perish in, and for their iniquities ; unless, by divine grace, they be turned from them, and brought to believe in Christ for the remission of them. May we therefore, in solemn reflections on all this, absolutely renounce every kind of idol, and worship the Lord our God, and him only ; and never entertain a degrading thought of Christ, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the true God, and the author of eternal life ! To whom be glory now and for ever. Amen.



# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

## Second Epistle general of JOHN.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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### The Preface to the Second Epistle of JOHN.

**T**HE matter and stile, the spirit of love, and many expressions in this and the third epistle (which are thought to have been wrote soon after the first) being not only like, but the very same, with those that appear in the first epistle of the Apostle John, these, as well as that, have been generally, and with good reason, received as canonical pieces of his writings. (See the preface to the first epistle.)

This second epistle, as many judicious expositors think, was wrote to some noted person of quality and eminent Christian matron, whose proper name was either Electa (*Ελεκτα*) which we render elect, or Cyria, (*Κυρια*) which is rendered lady, and to her religious children, as the third was personally to Gaius; while others suppose, that by the elect lady is meant in a figurative sense, some New Testament church, as a collective body, most probably at Jerusalem, and by her children, the particular members of that church; and that by the elect sister (ver. 13.) is meant the church, where the apostle resided when he wrote this epistle. But whatever dubious conjectures may lie on one or the other side of the question, I rather take it to be meant of some particular person and her children, whether her name were Cyria or Electa, or not; because the apostle speaking in the singular number says, (ver. 4. 5.) *I rejoice greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth. And I beseech thee, Lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to thee*, which does not seem to be very properly understood of a church; and speaking of the elect sister's children greeting her, (ver. 13.) he expresses it in the singular number, saying greet thee. Accordingly the paraphrase keeps up the air of a personal address to the elect lady and her children, which as it,  
like

like the rest of the holy scriptures, was written for our learning, may be considered with an application to any church or body of Christians, and particular persons among them, so far as its subject matter and terms agree to them, as the third epistle to Gaius may, and as what God said personally to Joshua is applied in common to all true believers, Heb. xiii. 5. (see the note there.)

*In this short letter the Apostle salutes the elect lady and her children, 1—3. Expresses his joy in, and further excites their faith and love, 4—6. Cautions them to be upon their guard against deceivers, whom he describes, 7—9. Directs their conduct toward them, 10. 11. And concludes with excusing the shortness of his writing, by a promise, God willing, to make them a visit, and discourse more largely about things, some of which he had touched upon; and with salutations from the children of her elect sister, 12. 13.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth:

1. JOHN, who by a far advanced age in nature and Christianity, as well as by his apostolic office, and that of long standing, is the only surviving apostle, and so emphatically the elder of the church of Christ, sends this letter to the noble matron; who is well known to be, not only a person of high birth and figure in the world; but, which is most of all to her honour, an excellent and eminently choice Christian, (see the note on Rom. i. 1.) which carries an evident token of God's having from the beginning chosen her to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; (2 Thess. ii. 13.) and together with her, the writer of this epistle includes her amiable children who are partakers of the same faith with herself; all of whom, mother and children, I sincerely and affectionately love in Christ, who is the Truth, (John. xiv. 6.) and for the sake of their having embraced him and the truth of the gospel; And not only I myself, but all those likewise that have heard of them, and especially that have the honour of their acquaintance, and are themselves enlightened with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and of his true doctrine, (ver 9.) bear a high esteem of them.

a For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever:

2. This our affection is of a spiritual nature merely, or chiefly at least, on account of the Lord Jesus who is the truth, and of their harmonious agreement with us in receiving the word of truth, with which God of his own will has begotten us; (Jam. i. 18.) and which, being an incorruptible seed, abides as a true and living principle of faith and holiness in us, and will remain, as such, in our souls all our days upon earth, and then flourish up into eternal life in heaven.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

3. In the fulness of my heart, and with humble confidence that my desire shall be answered, I earnestly beg for you, (*your*) mother and children, that all the riches of free love and favour, all tender compassion and pardoning mercy, and all manner of peace in your own souls, with God and one another, and with the whole household of faith, together with all prosperity of every kind, especially in your spiritual concerns, may abound towards, and abide with you all, (*with you*) from God the Father, who in the oeconomy of salvation, is to be considered as the original fountain of all blessings; and from the anointed Lord and Saviour, who in his divine nature is the eternal Son of the eternal Father with the most eminent propriety, and with the highest delight, as he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and is the dearest Son of his love; (Heb. i. 3. and Col. i. 13.) and who in his office-capacity is the only mediator, purchaser and dispenser of all the blessings that come from the Father through him. All this I earnestly wish and hope in the sincerity and affection of my heart for you, \* that ye may be established in truth and love, and persevere in the profession of them according to the gospel.

4 I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

4. In testimony of the sincerity of my love and desire for you, I can assure your ladyship that my soul was warmed with exceeding joy, (*or*) because, upon good evidence, I was well satisfied that, of the children which God has graciously given you, there are some, at least, who have not only received Christ and the truth of the gospel in the notions of their heads, but have received them with faith and love to influence their hearts and lives; † inasmuch, that wheresoever they go, their conversation is answerable thereunto, in obedience to the holy commandment, which we the apostles of Christ have received from God the Father with a commission to declare it.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though

5. And now, as the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and

#### N O T E S.

\* In truth and love may relate either to Christ's being the Son of the Father, or to the apostle's wishing that grace, mercy, and peace might be with them, or, to the end for which he desired this on their behalf, as represented in the paraphrase.

† It is probable that, on one occasion

or other, some of her sons had travelled abroad, as the word (*περιεπατειν*) may signify; and that the apostle had met with them, and seen their excellent spirit and deportment to be as became the gospel of Christ, and therefore spoke of them as persons whom he had found walking in the truth.

I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

and of faith unfeigned, (1 Tim. i. 5.) one great reason of my writing is to intreat you, dear lady, to cultivate a holy disposition conformable to the nature and design of the great law of love, (Matth. xix. 19.) not that I mean to write and recommend to you any new commandment, as though I would impose any thing that you are not already acquainted with and obliged to obey; but what I speak of is only, for substance, that summary comprehensive commandment of the second table of the moral law, which was enjoined at the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation, and which our blessed Lord repeated and further explained, inculcated and enforced by evangelical motives, at the beginning of his ministry, namely, that from a principle of love to God, we, as his disciples, should bear a hearty affection one towards another, in imitation of his love to us. (See the note on John xiii. 34.)

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

6. And this is the test, proof and evidence of a truly Christian love, and is its genuine tendency and effect, that it engages us to have a conscientious, cheerful and universal respect to all God's commandments. (1 John v. 3.) But the law of love, as springing from faith in Christ, (1 John iii. 22, 23.) and influential to all holy obedience, is the commandment, which I have principally in my eye, that, according to what ye have heard of it in the preaching of the word, ever since ye were first acquainted with Christianity, ye should carefully continue to put it into practice suitable to the design of the gospel.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

7. For many false teachers are gone abroad in the world, on purpose to seduce Christians from the way of evangelical faith, love and obedience, and to sap the foundation of them all by their pernicious errors, who are so far from believing and acknowledging, that they flatly deny our Jesus to be the only true Messiah, who has actually appeared in human nature to fulfil the work of redemption; (see the note on 1 John iv. 2.) or deny his having had a real body of flesh, but affirm that he lived and died in appearance only. Whoever espouses and broaches such heretical notions, he is one of those deluders of the people, and direct opposers of the person, doctrine, and glory of Christ, and of the whole of his saving office, which he foretold would arise; (Matth. xxiv. 11.) and of which I have given warning. (1 John ii. 18.)

8 Look to your selves, that we hold not those things which we

8. Beware therefore of them, look about you, stand, mother and children, upon your guard, and take heed that your own faith and practice be not corrupted by them;

have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

them; that so neither ye yourselves, \* nor we the servants of Christ, may lose the good fruit of our ministry, which was instrumental in gaining you unto Christ, not only in profession, but, as we trust, in sincerity and truth: But, after all the attempts of deceivers to pervert you, hold that fast which ye have, that no man take your crown, (Rev. iii. 11.) and that we, together with you, may reap the whole of the blessed reward, answerable to the utmost of our hopes and desires, which God, for Christ's sake, has graciously promised to his faithful servants that turn many to righteousness; (Dan. xii. 3.) and to all them that love him. (Jam. i. 12.)

9 Whoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

9. Let men's pretences be what they will, every one who allowedly transgresses the law of God, and particularly that of love, (ver. 5. 6.) and do not continue to hold and profess the pure doctrine of Christ, as the true Messiah, (1 John ii. 22--24.) he has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him, nor has he any claim to an interest in God, or in his favour and love. He, on the contrary, who continues to believe and profess, and to practise according to the doctrine of Christ, and concerning him, is a true believer, in spiritual and holy union and communion both with the eternal Father and his eternal Son; (1 John i. 3. and ii. 24.) the Spirit of the Father and Son dwells in him, (1 John iv. 2.) and he has a sure interest in their favour and love.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

10. If there be any one that comes to you with pretences of preaching the gospel, and doth not bring the forementioned doctrine of Christ in his ministrations, but advances principles subversive of it, give him no hospitable entertainment, more than the common laws of humanity require, as though he were welcome to your house; no, nor so much as admit him into your doors to vent his errors in your family, and endanger the corrupting of them from the simplicity that is in Christ: † nor have any such familiar conversation with him,

#### N O T E.

\* The Alexandrian, Stephanus's, and other copies of good repute, read ye, instead of *we lose, we have wrought, and we receive.* (Vide Mill. in loc.) The paraphrase therefore is made with an accommodation to both senses, in a just consistency one with the other. But I rather prefer the common reading as most agreeable to a like passage of this apostle in 1 John ii. 28.

† To bid one God speed (*χαίρειν*) was a friendly salutation among the an-

ents; and the forbidding this to be used to such as propagate fundamental errors, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, is generally thought to allude to the Jews forbidding to have familiar correspondence with excommunicated persons, who were to be treated like Heathen men and Publicans, as our Lord also directed the proceedings of his church (Matth. xviii. 17.) against obstinate offenders, with whom the apostle Paul says they were not to eat. (1 Cor.

him, as looks like wishing that God would prosper him in his pernicious designs.

11 For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

11. For whoever shews him any countenance, and speaks him fair, like one that wishes him success in the abominable principles and practices which he would propagate, is accessory to, and by just construction a partner with him in his wicked works, and contracts the guilt of helping him forward therein, and of encouraging others to fall in with him.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

12. There are many things of this and the like nature that I could write to you, which I do not think proper to do at present, by further setting pen and ink to paper; but I live in hope, that, by the will of God, I may ere long have an opportunity of making you a visit, and personally conversing with you all, that we may have mutual pleasure, and an intire satisfaction, in freely talking them over by word of mouth.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

13. The pious children of your sister after the flesh, and in a spiritual sense your choice, excellent, and I trust your sister chosen in Christ, send their most dutiful respects to you. \* May there be many such ornaments to the Christian religion among ladies of distinction and their offspring! *Amen.*

#### N O T E.

v. 9. 11.) see the note there) And the story is well known which Eusebius relates from Irenæus, in his ecclesiastical history, (lib. 4. cap. 14.) where he says, "The apostle John going into the bath at Ephesus to wash himself, and seeing Cerinthus there, a notorious heretic, leaped out of the bath unwashed, saying, that he feared lest the bath should fall down, when Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, was in it; and Polycarp, one of John's disciples, meeting at a certain time with Marcian, who said to him, acknowledge

"me, he answered, I know thee to be "the first-born of Satan." So greatly were the apostles and their disciples afraid of countenancing and freely conversing with any that had grossly adulterated the truth, even as Paul says, *a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.* (Tit. iii. 10.)

\* Probably the sister herself was absent, if not dead, when the apostle wrote this epistle, and therefore he sent only the salutation of her children, at their request.

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How rare, hut O how lovely is it for persons of quality and their children to embrace the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Christ with faith and love, and to walk answerable to it. All faithful ministers and friends to the truth of the gospel greatly rejoice where-ever they find it, and most sincerely wish them the best blessings from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, his dear and only begotten Son.---Christian religion makes no abatement of civil respect to persons of high rank and near kin; but gives a spiritual turn to the most dutiful and affectionate salutations of them.---How important is it for professing believers to stand fast and persevere in the faith of Christ, as the incarnate and atoning Saviour, and in the most cordial love to him, and to one another for his sake, according to the commandment of God, inclusive of a conscientious respect

respect to every other precept ! These, and these only, have the benefit of a special relation to, and interest in God the Father, and his eternal Son. But, in order to their evident and comfortable continuance herein, how highly doth it concern them, that they be not deceived by false teachers, and infected with antichristian errors, lest they themselves, as well as those that were instrumental to their conversion, should be disappointed of the ample satisfaction they hoped for in the happy effects of the gospel upon them ! And how cautious should they be of giving any encouragement or countenance to seducers, that would subvert the fundamental articles of faith, relating to the person and offices, doctrine and glory of Christ ! They who bid them God speed are accessary to all the mischief that is done by their destructive errors.—But these things may be better talked over in a free conversation with private Christians, more at large, than can well be wrote in a short letter. May all professors of Christ be preserved by divine grace, from every delusion ! Amen.

# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE

## Third Epistle general of JOHN.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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The Preface to the Third Epistle of JOHN.

**I**T is needless to add much to what has been said in the prefaces to the two former epistles of John. Gaius, to whom this was wrote, is most generally thought to have been that Gaius, whom the Apostle Paul called his host, Rom. xvi. 23. (See the note there.) But as various persons bore that name, it is hard to determine who this Gaius was.

*The Apostle congratulates Gaius upon his eminent piety and hospitality, 1—8. Cautions him against siding with Diotrephes, who was a minister of a haughty and turbulent spirit, 9—11. But recommends Demetrius as a man of an excellent character, 12. Excuses the brevity of this letter by the hope he had of soon seeing Gaius, and concludes with salutations, 13. 14.*

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

**T**HE elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

**J**OH N the Apostle who, on account of his great age and high office, may with double propriety, and peculiar emphasis, be stiled the elder, sends these few lines to the dearly beloved Gaius, for whom I, who call myself the elder, have the most sincere affection, on account of his attachment to the truth of the gospel.

2 Beloved, I with above all things that thou

2. So eminent are your light, grace, and holiness, and so evident the fruits of them, my dear Christian friend, that when I consider the weakness and infirmity



mayst prosper  
and be in health,  
even as thy soul  
prospereth.

ty of your bodily state of health, \* and the many difficulties that obstruct your being so vigorously and extensively useful, as your pious and generous temper disposes and qualifies you for, I have nothing so much at heart relating to you, as to desire and beg of God, that all your affairs of life and animal nature may hold equal pace with your judicious and thriving soul in all its spiritual concerns.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

3. For I exceedingly rejoiced, when those Christian brethren that came from you gave an account of the sincerity of your faith, by means of which the word of truth, the gospel of salvation has taken possession of your heart, as evidently appears by your steadily persevering to walk in Christ, and in the way of truth and holiness, through the whole course of your life and conversation, in these perilous days of persecution, defection and error.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.

4. Nothing can afford me a greater satisfaction and delight, than to hear, as I do of you and others, (2 epist. ver. 4.) that those converts, whom I think of with as much tenderness, care and affection, † as if they were my own children according to the flesh, hold fast the truth of the gospel in its purity, and live in all holy conversation and godliness answerable to it.

5 Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers.

5. It is an unspeakable pleasure to me, my dear Gaius, when I hear and reflect upon it, that you act with an integrity becoming your lovely character, and with faithfulness to your obligations, talents and conscience, as a Christian, in all compassionate and generous assistances to the ministering servants of Christ, and private brethren of your church and acquaintance, that need your liberality; and to religious strangers that are driven from place to place by the violence of persecutions, or voluntarily go abroad to preach the gospel, and are well recommended to you.

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6. Some

N O T E S.

\* It is probable that Gaius was of a sickly constitution, and met with losses, or entanglements in secular affairs, through persecutions for the sake of Christ, which were a restraint upon some more eminent degrees of publick services, that he might otherwise have gone into. This therefore was the best wish that the Apostle could make for Gaius. But to wish that prosperity of soul may be the measure of prosperity in health and worldly affairs to the greatest part of mankind, would be to imprecate a curse instead of desiring a blessing upon them.

† Gaius (if it was he whom the A-

postle Paul called his host while he was at Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23) seems to have been converted by that Apostle who baptized him, 1 Cor. i. 14. and spoke of himself as the spiritual father that had begotten the Corinthians by the gospel, and espoused them to Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 15. and 2 Cor. xi. 2. however, when our Apostle speaks of Gaius and other believers as his children, it may be considered as the tender stile of paternal love and affection toward them, who were the instruments of their conversion; and his using this appellation, when writing under the character of the elder, has its peculiar beauty.

6 Which have born witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.

6. Some of these who have been refreshed by your bounty, have publicly bore an honourable testimony to your benevolence and hospitality in the presence of the church, where I now reside; (see the preface to the first epistle) and as they are about to return to you, and then proceed to some other places for further spreading the gospel among the Gentiles; if, according to your wonted kindness, you will be so good as to do what in you lies to give them all needful assistances for their journey, in a manner suitable to your own Christian temper, and to their relation to, and employment for God, you will act (κατα) a worthy part toward them, in imitation of his goodness.

7 Because that for his names sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

7. For in their love and obedience to our blessed Lord, and zeal for his glory, they, though of the Jewish nation, cheerfully went abroad with a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; and, that they might do it without prejudicing the Gentiles against them, as though they were mercenary in their designs, they waved their right of claiming a maintenance from them; (see the paraphrase and notes on 1 Cor. ix. 4—14.) and gave their labours freely, casting themselves on the providence of God for a subsistence, without asking or receiving any thing towards it from the Gentile converts.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

8. It therefore certainly is our duty, who wish well to the cause of Christ and to immortal souls, to take such generous, and disinterested, and needy ministers into our affectionate care and kind regards; and to be helpful to them according to our ability, that we may have the pleasure and the honour of bearing a part with them in the success of their ministrations, by contributing to their maintenance; and so may work together with them in propagating the truth of the gospel among Gentiles, as well as Jews.

9. I would have wrote a letter \* to recommend these worthy

#### N O T E.

\* Several critics have observed, that according to the indefinite latitude of the Aorist (επαλα) I wrote may be rendered I would have wrote, or was about to have wrote to the church, referring not to any former letter, but to what the Apostle would have wrote, had it not been for the malignant lordly temper and influence of Diotrephes among them, probably the church at Corinth, of which Gaius appears to have been a member, if it is the same that is spoken of Rom. xvi. 23. (see the note there.) And then, what the Apostle adds about Diotrephes, gives a very good and obvi-

ous reason why he wrote to Gaius about receiving the brethren, rather than to the church, or to Diotrephes, who seems to have been a furious judaizing Christian, and an imperious overbearing and leading man, if not pastor of the church, that had assumed to himself such an exorbitant power over it, as would have enabled him, either to suppress the letter, or to defeat its design, by forbidding the church to comply with it, and casting them out that would, nevertheless, shew kindness to the travelling preachers to the Gentiles whom it recommended.

9 I wrote as to the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

worthy brethren to the church, of which you, my dear Gaius, are a member, to encourage and assist them in their important service: But Diotrophes, as I am well informed, behaves at such an imperious and haughty rate, and is so very ambitious of bearing an absolute sway, and of carrying every thing among them in an arbitrary manner, just according to his own mind and humour, that whatever I say, even by apostolic authority, stands for nothing with him, but is treated with disdain, as far as it thwarts his pride, prejudices and selfish designs. I therefore chose rather to write to you about this affair, than to them, or him, who so tyrannically lords it over them, and so contemptuously rejects both me and the brethren, that are for propagating the pure gospel of Christ among the Gentiles. (ver. 5-8.)

10. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating against us with malicious words, and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

10. This is so unflatteringly domineering and insolent, and so injurious to the apostolic character, to the truth itself, and to the common rights and privileges of the church, that for this reason, whenever I may have an opportunity of making them a visit, I will severely animadvert upon, and publicly expose and reprove him before the whole church for the evil of his doings, who gives himself a scandalous liberty to talk saucily and impertinently, with wicked and malicious reproaches of me and the brethren recommended by me, as though we were beneath notice and regard. And, not being satisfied with this, he not only himself refuses to shew any kindness to the brethren that have exposed themselves to wants and hardships in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; but, by his arbitrary way of proceeding, hinders those from countenancing and assisting them that are well inclined to it; and is so violent against them, that if they either will not, or in conscience dare not comply with his unreasonable impositions, he, by his own usurped authority, excommunicates them from any further relation to, or communion with the church.

11. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good: He that doth good, is of

11. My dearly beloved Gaius, take heed of being intimidated by his haughty and tyrannical management, much more of being influenced to an imitation of his wicked temper and ways, or of any sinful practice whatever; but copy after † every thing that is excellent

M 2

N O T E.

† Diotrophes having been spoken of as a wicked man before, ver. 9. 10. and Demetrius being recommended as a good man immediately after, ver. 12. it is natural to suppose that the Apostle had

his eye upon both these persons, as well as their ways in his exhortation to follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.

God: but he  
that doth evil,  
hath not seen  
God.

cellent in a good man, wheresoever you see it. He who is a doer of good, (*εὐεργετικός*) and that particularly in a way of benevolence to the servants of Christ for his sake, is born of God, bears his likeness, lives under the influence of his Spirit, is approved of him, and has communion with him: But whosoever he be that is a worker of iniquity (*κακοεργός*) like Diotrephes, and that particularly in haughty insolence, and in cruel and malicious opposition to the faithful servants of Christ, is a stranger to the true knowledge of God and communion with him, who is love. (1 John iii. 6. 10. and iv. 3.)

12 Demetrius  
hath good re-  
port of all men,  
and of the truth  
itself; yea, and  
we also bear re-  
cord, and ye  
know that our  
record is true.

12. There is one among you, a man of a more excellent spirit than Diotrephes; such an one I would recommend to your imitation; and that is the noted Demetrius, \* who is a Christian of a most amiable character, particularly for beneficence and charity, among all his acquaintance, whether professors or not, as appears from many instances of his goodness, and as must be acknowledged, to the credit of the gospel, by every one that would speak the truth concerning him; yea, and we the apostles and ministers of Christ cannot but bear an honourable testimony to him, from what we have seen or heard of him, as an exemplary and public spirited Christian, and those of you who are sincere members of the church (*ἐκκλησία*) well know that our testimony, (*μαρτυρία*) which is never given upon slight evidence, may be fully depended upon as faithful and true.

13 I had ma-  
ny things to  
write, but I will  
not with ink  
and pen write  
unto thee:

13. Many other things were in my mind to write to you, relating to these and such like points; but upon further thoughts, I judge it may be more prudent not to commit them by pen and ink to paper in this epistle to you.

14 But I trust  
I shall shortly  
see thee, and we  
shall speak face  
to face. Peace  
be to thee. Our  
friends salute  
thee. Greet the  
friends by name.

14. But I hope by the will of God, ere long, to make you a visit, (ver. 10.) and then we shall have an opportunity for personal conversation together by word of mouth, in which we may freely talk over these things at large. In the mean while, I heartily wish and pray, that all prosperity of every kind, relating to soul and body, may attend you. Our Christian friends in my neigh-

#### N O T E.

\* What Demetrius this was, or whether he were a minister, or private member, or officer of the church, is unknown to us; though it was well known, and he was honourably spoken of, in these days: And, by the Apostle's cha-

racter of him he appears to have been an exemplary Christian, particularly for hospitality; and on that, as well as on other accounts, a pattern of good works worthy of imitation.

neighbourhood send their most affectionate respects to you. Be pleased to make mine acceptable to all the orderly members of the church, and cordial lovers of Christ and truth, and friends to me and his ministering servants, in your parts, as though I particularly mentioned them by name.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How desirable, but, alas! How few are the instances of such prosperity of soul in spiritual concerns, as one would wish to be the measure of a proportional state of bodily health and success in temporal affairs! Such Christians as abound in faith and charity toward their pious acquaintance and strangers, and give substantial proofs of it in their lives, are exceeding lovely and greatly beloved, rejoiced in, caressed, and honourably spoken of as worthy of imitation, by all true friends to the gospel of Christ, and especially by his ministering servants. But how should proud, insolent imposers upon churches, and malicious revilers of the uncorrupted gospel and its faithful preachers, be detested, exposed, and censured, as open enemies to it and them, and as injurious and domineering lords over God's heritage, who will neither do good themselves, nor suffer others to do it that would! They are strangers to the true knowledge of God: But all who, from principles of faith and love, seek and do the things that please him, are his children, and ought for his sake, to assist ministering servants in their Lord's work, that they may bear a part in propagating evangelical truth and the good of precious souls. To write such things as these to Christian Friends, as occasions offer, is very useful: But how much more delightful and advantageous is it to converse freely together about them! May all religious affections be ever preserved among true believers, and mutual sincere wishes of every kind of happiness, both temporal and spiritual, be cultivated between them, with cordial friendship one towards another! Amen.

# A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

## General Epistle of JUDE.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

### The Preface to the General Epistle of JUDE.

**T**HE apostle Jude, the author of this epistle, styles himself the brother of James, (ver. 1.) and was called the son of Alpheus and Mary, and own brother to James the less, (Luke vi. 16. and Mark xv. 40.) to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, who infamously betrayed his Lord, accordingly our apostle is called Judas, not Iscariot. (John xiv. 22.)

His principal design in writing this epistle was to caution and fortify the Jewish converts, perhaps, as Dr Lightfoot thinks, those especially of Judea, against being drawn into apostacy by means of the false teachers that had arose, and were very busy among them, to subvert the foundation of Christianity. And as the argument of this is much the same with, especially the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter, it is generally thought to have been wrote about the same time, three or four years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and great assistance may be gathered for understanding one of them by comparing it with the other.

*The Apostle salutes the Christians to whom he wrote, and exhorts them to stand fast in the faith against those Jewish zealots that would undermine it, 1—4. Shews the danger of being infected by them, and the dreadful punishment which shall be inflicted on them and their followers, as exemplified in the unbelieving Israelites, in the fallen angels, and in Sodom and Gomorrah, 5—7. Gives a hideous description of these seducers and their deplorable end, 8—16. Cautions believers against being surprized at such deceivers arising among them, as being forewarned, that they might be forearmed against them, and maintain their own steadfastness by faith and prayer, and a prudent care one of another, 17—23. And concludes with a lofty encouraging doxology, 24. 25.*

**TEXT.**

**PARAPHRASE.**

**J**UDE the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

1. **J**UDAS, not Iscariot, but a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, sent forth by his immediate commission to preach the gospel, even that Judas, who, by natural birth, was brother to James the less, sends greeting to all believers of the circumcision, who may be considered, in the judgement of charity, as those that were set apart by God the Father, for himself in his eternal purposes of love and grace, as his elect \*; and, in consequence thereof, have been secured in Jesus Christ, their covenant head, and preserved by his all-governing providence from being cut off by death in their unconverted state, and, in due time, were effectually called to the knowledge of him, and to a participation of all the privileges and blessings of the gospel here, and of his glorious kingdom hereafter. (1 Thes. ii. 12.)

2 Mercy unto  
you, and peace,  
and love be mul-  
tiplied.

2. May the tenderest compassion of the Father of Mercies toward the miserable and unworthy, and peace with him and one another, and in your own consciences, together with the best of all prosperity of every kind, and all the excellent fruits of his special and distinguishing love, with the richest manifestations of it, encrease abundantly, in their utmost fulness, towards all and every one of you, unto the begetting of the most fervent love to him and one another.

3 Beloved,  
when I gave all  
diligence to  
write unto you  
of the common  
salvation; it  
was needful for

3. My dearly beloved in the Lord, when I was studiously thoughtful about, and earnestly applied to the work of sending an epistle to you, concerning that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is common to you and me, and all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, and is proposed and recommended in the gospel, to the acceptance

## NOTE

\* As sanctified, and preserved are mentioned before called, they seem to relate, not so immediately to internal holiness, preservation in the faith, which are after calling, as to separation to God, as the word sanctified signifies; (See the notes on John x. 36.) and xvii. 17.) and to a federal and providential preservation in Christ before, and in order to these persons being called. Or if, with Beza, Pareus, and Dr Whithy. we admit of a transposition of the sentence, then the order and construction will stand thus *τοὺς ἁγιοὺς ἐν Θεῷ πατρὶ ὁ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἰσχυρὸς τηροῦμενος* to the called that have been sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in, or by Jesus Christ. And this still points our

thoughts the same way, as it speaks of their having been sanctified, and preserved, antecedent to their being called: And so sanctified by God the Father answers to elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and not to the sanctification of the Spirit in 1 Pet. i. 2. and the Alexandrian, Stephanus's and some other copies, and the Syriac, Ethiopic, and other ancient versions, (Vid. Mill. in loc.) instead of sanctified read beloved (*ἀγαπημένοις*) by God the Father. But, which ever way we take it, the sanctification and preservation of the called are ascribed, not to themselves, but to the gracious acts of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ.

me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

tance of all sorts of sinners, to whom it is preached with this assurance, that *whoever comes to Christ, he will in no wise cast him out.* (John vi. 37.) This is a point of such vast importance, and so vehemently struck at in this day of sad defection, and of intriguing, as well as violent methods to overthrow it, that I thought it necessary, under divine suggestion, to write to you about it, and stir you up by every consideration relating to your own safety and comfort, and to the glory of Christ and of God in him, to exert yourselves, in an humble dependence on divine grace, with the utmost vigour, even as it were, to an agony of labour, strife and concern, (*συνανίστασθαι*) in maintaining, defending and practising the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of faith in its full extent, with respect to the person, offices, righteousness, grace, and government of the Lord Christ, which was once for all perfected, and was delivered by him to his holy apostles, and by them to the church, consisting of believers that are holy in heart and life; and which was committed as a trust and treasure to them, that they might keep it faithfully, and transmit it to posterity, and not suffer it to be altered, or wrested out of their hands, by any means whatsoever. I say there is great need that I should write to you about this.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny-

4. For there are certain impious and heretical men, who have clandestinely introduced themselves, by craft and flattery, among you, unawares indeed to you, but not to God; they being men, who were written of in ancient prophecies, \* according to the still more ancient records of the divine mind, as a set of ungodly men, that shall be brought to the awful judgement and righteous punishment, due to them for their iniquities; who, under pretences of having embraced Christianity, pervert

#### N O T E.

\* Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation manifestly relates, not to their having been before ordained to their sin, but to their being awfully judged and condemned for it. In this view it appears to me to be of little moment, whether before of old ordained refers to what was anciently written in prophecies, if any such can be found, besides that of Enoch, which is not written in the Old Testament, nor, as far as I know, written at all; or to what was, as it were, written in the eternal counsels of God, in which he determined to punish them, not as creatures simply considered, but as sinners. For whatever has been before written in di-

vine predictions concerning them, it was only a transcript of what God had before determined to inflict upon them, according to the due desert of their iniquities, which he foresaw they, through the perverseness of their own hearts, would voluntarily and maliciously involve themselves in. And I cannot conceive, why there should be any thing more harsh in the idea of God's having before appointed, than of his having foretold the righteous procedure, whereby he will take vengeance upon them for their heinous provocations; and therefore both are suggested in the paraphrase.



ing the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

pervert the doctrine of the grace of God unto the indulging of wanton and lascivious practices; and who, either to countenance themselves therein, \* or to throw slander upon the principles and profession of sincere believers, put a corrupt and reproachful construction upon this gospel of free grace, as though it were calculated to encourage dissolute manners; and, by their wicked courses, they practically deny the wisdom, holiness and authority of God in his moral precepts delivered under the Old Testament, even of that God, who, to the exclusion of all that are not by nature God, is the only living and true God: (see the notes on John xvii. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 1.) and at the same time they reject the true gospel-doctrine concerning the divine person and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophet, priest and king of the church; whose gospel, as a prophet, is the doctrine according to godliness; (1 Tim. vi. 3.) who gave himself for us, as a priest, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; (Tit. ii. 14.) and the sceptre of whose kingdom, as a king, is a sceptre of righteousness. (Heb. i. 8.)

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

5. To deter you therefore from giving heed to these seducers, I would remind you, though ye, as conversant with the Old Testament, have already known, and been fully assured, that the Jehovah of Israel, having, with an outstretched arm, delivered his professing people out of their extreme bondage and oppression in the land of Egypt, did nevertheless afterward cut off multitudes of them in the wilderness, by terrible judgements, for their disobedience and unbelief; (1 Cor. x. 5—10.) and they who, being corrupted by these deceivers, fall into like sins, especially under the clearer light of the gospel, must expect to be still more severely punished after their example. (1 Cor. x. 11.)

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness,

6. And as ye cannot but know, so ye ought seriously to consider, and reflect upon the tremendous condition of those once happy and holy angels, (a superior order of beings to man) who did not maintain their integrity in that original state of honour and dignity (*αγγελον*) in which God created them, but relinquished, and, by the righteous judgement of God, (2 Pet. ii. 4.) were cast down

#### N O T E.

\* Turned the grace of God into lasciviousness may be understood, either of these false teachers taking liberty from the doctrines of grace, to indulge their sensual inclinations; or of their maliciously stigmatizing the gospel-doctrine,

concerning it, as though in its own nature and design, it led to all impurity. But I am most inclined to the last of these senses; because they professedly opposed, instead of owning the true doctrine of the grace of God,

nato the judgment of the great day.

down from the mansions of bliss and glory which he had given them to be their own proper abode forever, in case of their continuing in sinless obedience to him. These, on account of their revolt from God, and rebellion against him, through pride, envy, and affectation of a higher power and dominion, than he had assigned to them, he has put into safe custody, like condemned prisoners that are loaded with fetters, and has held them fast by his holy purpose, power and providence, as with strong and perpetual chains of the horrible darkness of sin and misery, and dismal despair, against the final judgement of the great day, when their torment will be completed, and when all apostates, and impenitent unbelieving sinners shall depart from the blissful presence of Christ, *into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* (Matth. xxv. 41.)

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

7. Utter destruction shall certainly and suddenly come from the Lord upon all such, even as it did upon the infamously wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the neighbouring cities of Adma and Zeboim, (Gen. xix. 24. 25. and Deut. xxix. 23.) in storms of fire and brimstone, rained down from heaven upon them for the flagitious crimes which they greedily committed, by going into all manner of uncleanness, and particularly the unnatural monstrous sin of men with men. The perpetual desolation of that wicked people, and of their cities, the evident marks of which remain to this day, is exhibited in the sacred history, and in providence, to open view, as an example of God's tremendous vengeance, which carries a lively emblem of the everlasting destruction of all the wicked and ungodly in hell-fire.

8 Likewise also to these filthy dreamers desile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

8 In like manner also, these profligate creatures, who vainly delude themselves and others with their own imaginations, which are no better than foolish and impure dreams, indulge gratifications of fleshly lusts that war against the soul; and desile their own bodies by their lewd practices; † Yea more than that, they, like lawless persons, treat all the authority of secular magistrates with insolence, and set at nought all civil government with contempt, especially so far forth as it it would restrain their exorbitant vices; and they vilify the persons, as well as the authority of those rulers that

#### N O T E.

† These seducers undoubtedly reviled ecclesiastical, as well as civil governors; and we are led to a thought of this by the Apostle's comparing them

(ver. 11.) to those that perished in the gainsaying of Core against Moses and Aaron.

that are advanced to the highest of all earthly dignities, (*ἰσχυρ.* see the note on 2 Pet. ii. 19.) They also do the same by ecclesiastical officers and their doctrine, and even by the inspired Apostles themselves, who ought to be esteemed in their ministerial character, *as the glory of Christ.* (*δοξα Χριστοῦ*) 2 Cor. viii. 23. See the paraphrase there.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

9. All this is directly contrary to the excellent temper and behaviour of such as are most worthy of imitation, even in their treatment of the devil himself; as, to instance in one of the highest dignity, when (according to the traditional and currently believed account) Michael, † that eminent chief of the holy angels, was engaged in a remarkable contest with the prince of demons, as arguing against him about having the place known, where the body of Moses was buried, that he might have a further opportunity of tempting Israel to idolatry in worshipping it, for the prevention of which God, in infinite wisdom, concealed his sepulchre from them, (Deut. xxxiv. 6.) In this debate the archangel would not venture to do any thing, so contrary to his own holy nature, so offensive to God, and so much above his own match in the diabolical art of railing, as to return the reviling and opprobrious language of that foul spirit; but only said, in a way of solemn rebuke, I leave you to the righteous judgement of God, to deal with you according to your wicked design of drawing his people into the most flagrant sin against his divine majesty, crown and dignity.

10. But

#### N O T E.

† Some by Michael understand Christ himself, and others, the most eminent of all the holy angels. And Dr Lightfoot tells us, (vol. I. p. 338) that "among the Talmudicks there seems to be something like the relics of the story here referred to, viz of Michael, and the angel of death disputing or discoursing about fetching away the soul of Moses." But this is a different thing from disputing about the body of Moses. However Dr Whitby says in his note on this verse, "that there was an altercation betwixt Michael the archangel, and Samael the prince of the devils, about the body of Moses, we learn from the traditions of the Jews." On this supposition, the Apostle's arguing from some known and allowed tradition among them had, its weight in his dealing with them: And possibly, he might

know by divine revelation, that this was a real fact, and not an idle story, like many others of their traditions. The same may be observed with respect to what he says, ver. 14. about Enoch's prophecy. (See the note on 2 Tim. iii. 8.) Upon the whole, though I am far from being certain; yet, for want of a better, I incline to this literal interpretation, as more natural and less forced, than any other that has been offered on this difficult passage; among which the most probable of them seems to be that, which takes the body of Moses in a figurative sense, to signify the body or system of Moses's law. But still we are at as much uncertainty about there having been ever any such dispute between Michael and the devil about the law, as about the body of Moses.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts; in those things they corrupt themselves.

10. But these daring pretenders don't stick at vilifying and reproaching things, both civil and sacred, (see the note on ver. 8.) which are in their own nature so far from being evil, like the devil and his designs, that they are of eminent worth and importance; but the use, design and benefit of which they are utter strangers to: And (as) even in those things, that they naturally know, like animals void of reason, and by the light of nature cannot but know to be unlawful, they like irrational beasts behave as though they had no principle of reason to guide or govern them; but act at such a monstrously perverse, sensual and brutal rate, as to defile and debase themselves, beneath human nature, to the last degree.

11 We note them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

11. The most dreadful of all woes will surely fall upon their heads: for in hating and envying those, whom they ought to have treated with respect, they are influenced by the same malignant spirit that governed Cain, when he murdered his brother Abel, only because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. (1 John iii. 12. 15.) And, with a profusion of covetous, ambitious, and wicked desires and endeavours, (*ἐπιχθονῶν*) they have vigorously exerted themselves to corrupt the gospel, (ver. 4.) and draw the professors of it into sin and perdition; and so have imitated the treacherous iniquity of Balaam, that mad prophet, who, had God permitted him, would have cursed Israel, and ensnared them to their ruin, for the sake of the reward which Balak the king of Moab offered him. (Numb. xxii. 21. &c. see the note on 2 Pet. ii. 16.) And they set themselves against civil government, and the inspired apostles and servants of the Lord, to resist and reproach them, (see the note on ver. 8.) as Corah, Dathan and Abiram, with their accomplices, did in their pride and sedition against Moses the ruler, and Aaron the high-priest, for which the earth opened and swallowed them up alive, to the destroying of them all. (Numb. xvi. 1—33.) Awful emblems of the worse destruction, which shall come upon these envious and ungodly men!

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding them-

12. These, like odious and filthy blemishes and smears upon the face, or upon a garment, are the deformity, scandal and defilement of your feasts of entertainment, whether they be held in a way of civil or religious society and friendship, \* while they banquet with

#### N O T E.

\*It does not appear to me what feasts these were whether entertainments in token of civil friendship, or of religious

affection, which were used among Jews or Christians; and therefore the paraphrase leaves it undetermined,

selves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

with you, to gratify their luxurious appetites, without fear of the guilt they contract, or of the terrible wrath that awaits them for it. They put on false appearances; and are as useless and unstable as empty clouds that yield no water to refresh the earth; and they are driven about by their own lusts and passions, as those light clouds are by tempestuous winds, from one error and evil way to another: and as little benefit is to be expected from them, as from trees whose fruit is blighted, withers, rots and comes to nothing before it is ripe, like the immature fruit that drops off in autumn; (*ὅτι ἡρπύριον*) yea, as from trees that are perfectly, and as it were twice dead, to allude to these men, who, in their natural state were dead in sin, and now by their apostacy are confirmedly so, past recovery; and they are like trees stubb'd up by the roots, never to revive, or bring forth good fruit for ever, and only fit to be cast into the fire.

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

13. Nay, they are not only altogether and incurably useless, but horribly turbulent and pernicious. Their furious reproaches are belched out against the doctrines and disciples of Christ with noise and clamour, and threatnings of destruction, like the formidable billows of the sea in a violent storm, when it rages and foams, and casts up its own mire and dirt, (*lra. lvii. 20.*) as these malignants do their own filthiness, while they pour out their corrupt principles, vicious inclinations, and malicious slanders, which turn to their own shame. Under all their pretences to be lights and stars for the guidance of others, they wander from the truth and holiness of the gospel to mislead their followers, and are like the planets, which in themselves are dark bodies, and continually shifting their places, or like shining meteors which are called shooting or falling stars. They make a sudden blaze, and soon expire in darkness, are fleeting in all their ways, and run about from place to place to spread their wicked principles, temper and courses. So highly aggravated are their crimes, that, instead of their boasted light and their sensual pleasures, the horrors of the thickest darkness, misery, and black despair are laid up in store for them, by the righteous judgement of God, to be their dismal portion, without the least dawn of comfort or hope, to all eternity.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord com-

14. And even Enoch, the seventh person recorded in the line of descendents from Adam, (*Gen. v. 3---18.*) foretold in a general received traditional prophecy, (see the note on ver. 9.) such things so long ago, as are truly applicable to the sin and condemnation of these

very

eth with ten thousands of his Saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men persons in admiration, because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:

very men, saying, observe with attention and reverent awe, the Lord Christ, the promised Messiah is coming, and in due time will certainly appear in all his majesty and glory, with a retinue of Myriads, even an innumerable company of his holy ones, (*αγίας αὐτοῦ*) angels and saints, to their everlasting joy. (Matth. xxv. 31. and 1 Thess. iii. 13.)

15. He will then sit on the throne of his glory to arraign all mankind before him, and pass a decisive sentence upon them severally, according to their respective characters; and particularly to reprove, convict, condemn and punish all that shall then be found to be wicked and ungodly among them. He will severely reckon with them for all their impious works, which they have wrought with premeditated malice, and for all the virulent speeches which these licentious sinners have thrown out upon his person, gospel and cause, and upon his members and faithful servants for his sake, which he will resent in the day of judgement, as done against himself. (Matth. xxv. 45.)

16. The false teachers we are speaking of, will meet with the heaviest doom in that awful day: For they are secret murmurers against God and his providence, against magistrates and ministers, and against Christ and his followers and ways; and are continually finding fault and openly quarrelling with all his doctrines and dispensations, as being prejudiced against them, and dissatisfied with their own state and condition in the world; they, in the restless temper of their minds, pursue their own vicious inclinations to unlawful pleasures; and at the same time they talk in lofty, unintelligible, senseless strains, with high pretences to knowledge and religion; and, in the pride of their hearts, speak the most excessively vain and conceited things of themselves, that have nothing in them; and they extravagantly flatter, caress and extol persons of their own party, especially the rich among them, be they ever so vile; because they expect to reap some worldly advantage from them, to gratify their covetous and luxurious temper.

17. But, my dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, let none of these things move you from your own steadfastness; nor be ye stumbled at them, as though some strange thing had happened to you. (1 Pet. iv. 12.) To silence all such discouraging thoughts, call to mind and reflect upon the warnings about them, that have been given you beforehand, as by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself, (Matth. xxiv. 11.) so by his inspired

inspired apostles, (2 Tim. iii. 1. and 2 Pet. iii. 2. 3.) which being now fulfilled, are a confirmation of, rather than an objection against; the doctrines delivered by them.

18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

18. Remember how plainly they have told you, that in this concluding period of the Jewish church and state, and commencement of the last dispensation of grace, which is to continue to the end of the world, there certainly would arise profane scornful deriders of every thing that is sacred, and particularly of Christ's coming to judgement; (2 Pet. iii. 3. 4.) a set of abandoned men, who treat these solemn things with contempt and ridicule, that they may be the more easy in indulgences of their corrupt inclinations, according to the full bent of their own wicked hearts, that have cast off the fear of God:

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

19. These are the very men, of whom our blessed Lord and his apostles warned you; men that make factions and divisions in the church, alienating themselves from the true apostles, servants, disciples and doctrines of Christ, and forming separate parties of their own sortment, as though they were more holy than others; whereas, in reality, they are mere sensualists, governed by animal appetites, lusts and passions; and are entirely destitute of the enlightening, purifying and sanctifying gifts and graces of the holy Spirit.

20 But ye beloved, building up your selves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost,

20. But as to you, my dear Christian friends, take heed of being misled by men of such corrupt principles and practices. But go on by divine assistance, with integrity and faithfulness in your holy profession; and in order hereunto, persist in seeking, by all proper and appointed means, your own and your fellow Christians (see the note on Eph. iv. 32.) spiritual establishment and advances in grace, holiness and comfort, upon the foundation of faith, which is laid in the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (Eph. ii. 20.) and upon that principle of faith in you, which purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes this world; (Acts xv. 9. Gal. vi. 6. and 1 John v. 4.) and which derives all grace out of Christ's fulness to enable you to grow up in all things into him, who is the head: (Eph. iv. 15.) And together with a lively exercise of this most holy faith, be instant in prayer, under the guidance and influence of the holy Spirit to help your infirmities. (Rom. viii. 26.)

21. Keep your selves in the love of God looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

21. In this most excellent way of proceeding, let it be your constant study and endeavour to approve yourselves to God, as those that sincerely and fervently love him, and delight to keep his commandments, (1 John v. 3.) and be careful to cultivate this love in one another, as also to maintain a sweet and experimental sense of God's special love to yourselves, to influence you thereunto, as those that are looking, hoping and longing, in a prepared state and frame, for the final manifestations, fruits and effects of the gracious and merciful sentence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto your complete deliverance from all sin and sorrow, and admission to all the blessings of eternal life, even for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. i. 13.)

22. And of some have compassion, making a difference:

22. And as to such among you, that may be seduced into any error or sin, great prudence is to be used in a different manner of dealing with them, according to their different circumstances. Some that have been staggered, and in measure drawn aside, through their own inadvertence, ignorance and weakness, and the subtilty of deceivers, ye should treat with all tenderness, meekness, condescension and endearing kindness, and with a friendly and compassionate concern to recover and establish them.

23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

23. And others that have gone further lengths, and seem to be obstinate and hardened, like those who seduced them, ye ought to deal more sharply with, by faithfully setting before them their guilt and danger, the awful threatenings of God's word, and the dreadful wrath and ruin they expose themselves to, and by passing a church-censure upon them, if needful, that ye may awaken their just fears of persisting in the evil of their ways: This is the likeliest method, by the blessing of God, to reclaim them and prevent their eternal destruction; and to pluck them, with a sort of holy violence, as brands out of the fire that were very near being consumed by it. In all which ye should be influenced by an utter detestation of every thing that has any defilement in it; and should act with a holy resolution to avoid, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; (Eph. 5. 11.) in like manner as the Jews, according to the law of Moses, were not to touch any unclean thing; a garment, that had the plague of leprosy in it, was to be burnt. (Lev. v. 2. &c. and xiii. 52.)

24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from

24. Now, to conclude with a solemn doxology, which belongs as to all the persons in the adorable God-head



falling, and<sup>o</sup> to  
present <sup>you</sup>  
faultless before  
the presence of  
his glory with  
exceeding joy,

head, so particularly to our Lord Jesus Christ, \* whom we have been speaking of under such characters, as are peculiarly suited to your encouragement and relief under all your present troubles, (ver. 14. 15. 21.) I would express it in the following lofty and endearing strain; To him who has almighty power originally in himself, as God, and all office-authority, and qualifications, as mediator; and, having graciously undertaken, is as willing as able, to preserve you from apostacy, and from irrecoverably stumbling and falling into, and by the errors of the wicked; and, after your state of warfare is accomplished, to present you to himself, and to his Father, at his second coming, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish, (Eph. v. 27.) and should stand with complete acceptance in his immediate presence, when he shall appear in all his glory, and ye shall appear with him in glory, (Col. iii. 4.) and with triumphant and ecstatic joy, and all the holy angels and glorified saints, together with the sacred three, shall exceedingly rejoice with you.

15 To the on-  
ly wise God our  
Saviour, be glo-  
ry and majesty,  
dominion and  
power, both now  
and ever. A-  
men.

25. To this God our Saviour, who, together with the Father and Spirit, as infinitely, originally, essentially and communicatively the only wise God: To him, as well as to those other adorable persons, be ascribed, as is equally due, all the glory of his divine nature and attributes as God, and of all his love and grace, designs, undertakings and performances, as likewise all the grandeur of his heavenly Majesty, as God-man mediator, together with universal rule and government, might and authority, over all persons and things, in the kingdom of providence and of grace, now, henceforth, and for evermore. In this ascription of glory, may we and all the saints and angels join, as with one heart and voice! Amen, so let it be, and so it shall be.

#### N O T E.

\* It seems to me, that the divine person, here most immediately intended, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is principally spoken of all along in the preceding context, and is often styled, by way of eminence, The Saviour, and God our Saviour, as in Eph. v. 23. Phil. iii. 20. Tit. ii. 13 and 2 Pet. i. 1. and is here called the only wise God, (ver. 25. not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, but only of all idols. (See the note on John xvii. 3.) And as his presenting us faultless before the presence of his glory manifestly relates to the time of

his glorious appearing to judgement, for executing a dreadful sentence on the ungodly, and shewing mercy to believers unto eternal life; (ver. 14. 15. 23.) so this exactly agrees with the work that is peculiarly ascribed to him, as the Saviour of the body, and head of the church. Eph. v. 23—27 But I do not find that the presentation of the church at the last day is ever ascribed to God the Father. (See my volume of sermons on Jesus Christ, God-man, page 64. 65.)

## RECOLLECTIONS.

What an honour do the best of men think it, to be the faithful servants of Jesus Christ ! Such are heartily desirous that all the blessings of divine love, mercy and peace may be multiplied to the chosen and called of God ; and they lay themselves out, with diligence, to promote the salvation of all that believe in Jesus, and to excite their fervent zeal for preserving the doctrines of Christ, just as they were once delivered to the saints under the inspiration of his Spirit. How careful should all Christians be to guard against turning the doctrine of the grace of God into licentiousness ; and against such deceivers, as would slyly insinuate themselves into their affections, and overthrow the purity of the gospel, especially in its fundamental articles, relating to God and our Lord Jesus Christ ! The corrupters of this faith are wicked men, whom the sovereign and holy God has of old determined to punish for their impieties with everlasting destruction in all the horrors of the thickest darkness, misery, and despair. Thus he has dealt with the fallen angels, and the flagitious sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah ; and thus he will deal with the persecutors of his people, who, like Cain, hate and would murder them, for righteousness sake ; and, like Balaam, would curse and ruin them, for their own secular interest ; and like Corah and his company, set themselves in opposition to the servants of the Lord, and even to civil magistrates and all wholesome laws, through their own ignorance of their excellency, and through brutal propensities to what they cannot but know, by the light of nature, to be very fordid and desiling. These, under all their vain boasts, are an unstable, deluded and deluding sort of men ; haughty deriders of all that is sacred and worthy ; destitute of the Spirit of God ; and perfect sensualists that aim at nothing but worldly gratifications. But, ah ! what a reproach are persons of these odious characters to Christian or civil society, in their feasting with love and choice together ! They are not only useless and unprofitable, but injurious and dangerous : And when Christ shall appear in his glory, with an innumerable company of attending saints and angels, he will justly condemn and punish them for all their impious and malicious calumnies upon him and his people, doctrines and ways. But believers need not be staggered at, or by them, since our Lord himself and his apostles have given fair warning of them before-hand ; nor need they return railing for railing, in vindication of the truth and of themselves, but only refer them to that God, who judges righteously. But O what a happiness is it, amidst all these trials, to go forward in faith and prayer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to maintain our love to God and one another, and a sense of his love to us in an humble, patient and joyful expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life ! How greatly are those professors to be pitied, that are in danger of falling into the snare of deceivers ! With what gentleness are the weak among them to be treated and allured ! And with what holy violence, as by the terrors of the Lord, are the most obstinate and daring to be snatched, like brands out of the fire ! May all glory be ascribed to the only wise God, inclusive of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who is able in himself, and authorised in his office, to preserve us from all apostacy, and to present us without spot or blemish, and with unspeakable joy, before the presence of his own and his Father's glory, at his second appearing without sin unto salvation ! May we be found among this happy number at the great day of account ! Amen.

## A P R A C T I C A L

## E X P O S I T I O N

## O F T H E

## Revelation of St JOHN, the Divine.

In the Form of a PARAPHRASE.

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## The Preface to the REVELATION.

**T**HE writer of this sacred book appears with good evidence to have been the Apostle John, (Vid. Mill. Prolegom. pag. 19 ---- 21. and see Twell's examination of the late new text and version of the New Testament,) who is called the Divine, perhaps, because he had the special honour of God's giving him the extraordinary prophetic revelation contained in this book; or because he was an eminent advocate for the divinity of Christ, as appears in his gospel and epistles.

This important revelation, which is most commonly thought to have been written about the year of our Lord 96 or 97, may be cast into two principal parts. One, which lies in the three first chapters, and is delivered in an epistolary form to the seven famous churches in the provincial Asia, relates to the then present state of those churches, and the things that would soon be fulfilled in them. The epistles thus directed to them were indeed designed, like other parts of Scripture, for our instruction, in such cautions and encouragements, promises and threatenings, as are applicable to other persons and churches, in like circumstances, through all succeeding generations. But I could never see sufficient ground to think that they, as some suppose, were like the rest of this book, prophetic of a successive state of churches from the apostles days to the end of the world, which should correspond, in order of time, to that of these seven churches, all of which were written to, as considered in their then present and contemporary circumstances, and not in what they would be one after another, according to the order in which the epistles were directed to them: Nor do I apprehend the characters of each of those churches to be distinct

enough to mark out those imaginable periods, which, by the help of a fruitful invention and forced constructions, have been assigned to them by different learned writers with very different application. But some of them are as applicable to several ages, as to any one age of the church; and perhaps, there is hardly any particular age, except the last that is yet to come, in which there are not some churches or professing Christians, to which many of the things may be applied that are found in all these epistles; and this book of prophecy speaks of a glorious state of the church that shall be on earth in the last days, which none of these epistles, and least of all the last of them, can be supposed to exhibit to us.

The other principal, and by far greatest part of the prophetic revelation is introduced chap. iv. and, as I conceive, is carried on from thence to the end of the book, setting forth a regular series of events, which should come to pass in successive periods, relating to the Roman empire, and the church of Christ, as chiefly concerned with it, through all ages from the time of the apostle's writing to the consummation of all things, which shall issue in the utter destruction of hypocritical and formal professors, and all Christ's enemies, and in glorious days on earth, and the everlasting joy and triumph of the saints in heaven.

The meaning of these wonderful prophecies has been searched into, with great care and diligence, by many learned and pious men of former and later ages: But their interpretations in various instances are so very different and contradictory, and several of them so evidently proved by after facts to be entire mistakes, that I dare not presume to be very positive in determining upon all the events, that answer even such predictions, as may justly be supposed to have been already fulfilled; much less in fixing the exact time for the accomplishment of those that are still to be fulfilled in their respective seasons; concerning which we must needs be under some suspense, unless we could certainly know the point of time, from whence we are to begin the computation of such prophetic days or years, as are laid out for their period.

It may be said of the prophecies of this book, as it was to Daniel, when he heard, but understood not, and cried out, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? In answer to which he said, Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end, (Dan. xii. 8. 9.) intimating that they are not to be thoroughly understood till they be all completely accomplished; and even the predictions of our blessed Lord about his death, resurrection and exaltation were not clearly understood by his disciples till they were fulfilled; but then they remembered that he had said these things were written of him. (John ii. 22. and xii. 13-16.) Nor did the apostle Peter understand the full meaning of what Christ foretold about the baptism of the Holy Ghost as to be extended to the Gentiles, till the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his company, as it had before on Jewish believers; but then he remembered the word of the Lord, how that  
he

he said, John indeed baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost. (Acts xi. 15. 16.)

It seems to me, that one great design of prophecies is to leave our thoughts under some obscurity about their precise meaning and time of accomplishment, till events explain them; lest a certain knowledge beforehand of the things pointed to, and of the times in which they were to take place, should give umbrage to some reigning powers on earth, and should disconcert the ordinary course of human affairs, and put some men upon measures, which they otherwise would never have thought of, to fulfil the predictions; and thereupon the accomplishment of the prophecies, in their season, should be ascribed to the craft and management of men, rather than to the wisdom and power of God. But his bringing them about, one after another, in their proper time and order, without any design in the instruments of them to fulfil divine predictions, as was the case of Joseph's brethren, in selling him into Egypt, and of the Jews and Romans in concurring to crucify our blessed Lord, reserves the entire glory of the whole to his own over-ruling conduct, and is an undeniable testimony to his infinite unerring foreknowledge of the free actions of men, and to his all-governing providence in whatsoever comes to pass; and as fast as any of the prophecies of this book are manifestly fulfilled, they are a further confirmation of the truth of Christianity, and of the faith and hope of the church with respect to all that remains to be still performed, and are a rich encouragement to their patience under all their troubles, which in every period are foretold as to issue in bright scenes of prosperity and glory. And when the whole scheme shall be finished, every part will appear in its proper place and order, and a divine beauty will be seen to spread conspicuously through it all.

We may therefore, with some probability at least, humbly attempt to settle the interpretation of the prophecies by historical facts, as far as they have been hitherto fulfilled, which reach to the time of the fifth vial, according to some expositors; or of the sixth, according to others; and yet it is hard always to adjust even these with certainty, because there are some other events of providence, that may seem to be as fairly applicable to those parts of the prophecies. But, I think, the late learned Mr Lowman has, upon the whole, matched facts with accomplished predictions, better than any other writer that has fallen under my notice. And as nothing ever puzzled my thoughts on this book more, than the synchronisms, or contemporary events, which commentators have almost universally supposed to be represented in the seven epistles to the churches of Asia, and in the seal and book prophecies, as some distinguish them, or, as others call them, the open and the sealed book; so this gentleman, in his elaborate and judicious paraphrase and notes, and in his preface to the whole, seems to me to have settled the periods of the seals, trumpets and vials, with a good degree of probability, in a regularly connected and progressive order of time from the beginning to the end: And therefore I have mostly followed him in historical facts; and have in a manner done so entirely

entirely, with respect to the successive course of every period, which is carried on by seven epistles, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials, till all shall end in the glory of the millanum, and of the heavenly state.

And as my design is, through divine guidance, to set this, as well as the other parts of the New Testament, in as plain, practical and easy a light, as I can, before the minds of common Christians, the practical view is intermingled and pursued, more than I have met with in any other paraphrase; but as large quotations of antient authorities would not be much to their edification, and would swell this volume to a disproportionate bulk, which has already too far exceeded my expectation and design, I shall generally content myself with referring to the authorities which he, or others have quoted to support the application of histories to the hitherto fulfilled prophecies, in the course of the exposition. The contents of all at the head of each chapter, and as put together at the beginning of this volume, will give the reader a compendious view of the whole scheme.

## C H A P. I.

*A preface opens the divine original, designs and importance of this book, 1—3. The Apostle, John the writer of it, salutes the seven churches of Asia, wishing them grace and peace from God the Father, Son and Spirit, in distinctive oeconomical characters of them, 4—8. Declares when, where, and how the revelations were made to him, 9—12. And gives an account of his first vision, in which he saw Christ appearing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and holding seven stars in his right-hand; which were emblematical of the seven churches, and their pastors; and describes his appearing in such strong and lively figures of majesty and glory, as were suited to the encouragement of true believers, and the terror of backsliders and apostates, 13—2.*

### TEXT.

### PARAPHRASE.

**T**HE revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew un-

**1. T**HIS book contains a prophetic revelation from Jesus Christ, the exalted Saviour, to whom, as man and the great prophet of the church, God the Father gave it in commission, \* that he might make known

to

### N O T E.

\* As Christ sustained the character of a prophet in human nature, God the Father is spoken of with great propriety, according to the divine oeconomy, as giving this revelation to him; that, in the execution of his office, he might communicate it by his angel to John: but his understanding being infinite, as God, he, in that consideration of him, had no need of such a revelation; and

he, who sent his angel to shew these things, is styled the Lord God of the holy prophets, (chap. xxi. 6) which is a magnificent description of the only true God, and seems to be meant of the same divine person, who there says a little afterwards, (ver. 16.) I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things, and these things are here called The revelation of Jesus Christ.

to his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bore record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

4 **J**OH N to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne;

to his servants and saints those things which must soon begin to be fulfilled, and then be carried on, through their several periods, in as certain predictions, as if they were present facts, relating chiefly to the Roman empire, and his church as concerned with it, till they be complicated at the consummation of all things: and Jesus, the Sovereign Lord of all the angelic host, communicated them by the ministration of an holy angel, whom he sent with authority to notify them in the following visions to me, his servant and apostle whose name is John.

2. Who have heretofore wrote an authentic historical account of Christ, as the eternal Word of God (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*) who is God and was made flesh, and dwelt among us: (John i. 1. 14.) and have bore witness to him under divine inspiration, as the only true Messiah; and to the substance of all the doctrines which he taught, and the miracles which I saw him perform to confirm them; and shall now faithfully relate the further revelations, which he has made to me.

3. Happy is the man, who diligently reads and considers; and happier still are they, that attend to, receive and understand the design and meaning of the important things pointed out in the prophecy, which I am about to deliver, and that observe and compare the predictions therein written, and the events of providence answerable to them; and bear them upon their minds, and lay them to heart, with an humble and holy temper and deportment correspondent to them. For the time, in which some of them must begin to be accomplished, draws on apace; and, in comparison with the endless eternity that will follow, it cannot be long, before they shall all be as certainly fulfilled, as if they were instantly to come to pass.

4. **N**OW, according to the revelation, and commission to write it, which Jesus Christ signified to me by his angel, I John, send the first part of it in the following epistles from him; one to each of the seven principal churches, that are planted in the lesser Asia. May the divine favour, and its saving effects and manifestations in a special work of grace in your souls; and may a sense of the free favour, together with all manner of happiness, temporal, and especially spiritual unto eternal life, abound towards all and every one of you from God the Father, who, under the notion of deity and character of which he sustains in the

the scheme of providence and salvation, \* is to be considered as from everlasting to everlasting God, (Ps. xc. 2.) invariably and unchangeably the same in his being and perfections, counsels and designs, and ever has been, is, and will be the same in his love and care of his people; and from the divine Spirit, who is the sovereign author of all spiritual gifts and graces, and of every diversity of his supernatural operations; (1 Cor. xii. 4. 7—11.) which for the variety and perfection of them, and with a reference to the seven churches, may be called seven, under the denomination of spirits, as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; John iii. 6. and who is ever present with the Father, as before his throne, ready to execute his will in every thing, and particularly in what relates to the safety and welfare of the church!

5 And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead; and the prince of the kings of the earth: Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

5. 6. And may all these blessings be multiplied to you from Jesus Christ, through his mediation and merit, who, as a prophet, bears a faithful testimony to his Father's mind and will, and to his own character, as the Son of God and the true Messiah; and who as a priest, having offered up himself a sacrifice for sin, was in token of his acceptance raised from the dead, as the head of his body, the church, and as the very first that ever rose to immortal life, and that as the pattern, pledge and first fruits of their resurrection to it after him; (see Col. i. 18. and the note on 1 Cor. xv. 20.) and, in consequence of this, he, as the due reward of his atoning death, was exalted to his throne of glory, with an all fulness of authority and dominion, as *king of kings and lord of lords*, (chap. xix. 16.) and the head of all principalities and powers on earth, as well as in heaven, for the

#### N O T E.

\* Which is, and was, and is to come, cannot, I think, be considered as a personal distinctive character of God, the Father, merely as the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; because, what is nearly equivalent to this, and appears to be full as much personal, is affirmed of the Son, as when it is said, that he is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, ver. 8. 11. 17. and chap. xxii. 13. and perhaps in chap. xxi. 6. But if it be there understood of the Father, it shews that the very same divine characters are personally applied to both. (see the note below on ver. 8.) But *which is, and was, and is to come*, is a description of the divine nature, very properly applied to the Father, when

he and the Son and Spirit are represented as sustaining their respective parts in all dispensations, particularly relating to the church; for, in this economy, God the Father is to be considered as maintaining the prerogatives of deity, and the Son and Spirit as acting either from him, or towards him; accordingly, in the close of this verse, the Spirit is represented as before the throne, to act from the Father toward the church; and in the following verses, the Son is represented as acting toward the Father for the church in his priestly office, as well as from the Father toward the church in his prophetic and kingly offices; and he is mentioned last, because the apostle designed to enlarge upon his character.



the preservation and government of his people, and for restraining and subduing all his and their enemies! (Eph. i. 20—22. and Phil. ii. 8—11.) unto him who has freely loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, (Eph. v. 2.) and has cleansed us from the guilt and power of our sins by an effectual application of the virtue of his own precious blood, which he shed for the remission of them; and for redeeming us from all iniquity; (Matth. xxvi. 28. and Tit. ii. 14.) and has advanced us, in our relation to God, even his Father and our Father in him to the high honour of kings, or princes in a spiritual sense, that hold our dignities under him, in an intire dependence on him, and that have power to prevail with God in prayer, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and are heirs of the kingdom of glory, (Jam. ii. 5.) and enabled to govern our own spirits, and to overcome sin, Satan and the world; and are sanctified to his service, as priests, that have near access to God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. ii. 5.) unto this blessed, lovely and loving Jesus, who is divinely glorious in himself and in his office, be ascribed all possible honour, and be paid all solemn acknowledgements of his sovereign and universal dominion, from henceforth to all eternity, *Amen*, so be it, and so it shall be.

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so, *Amen.*

7. Observe, for your encouragement the happy issue of all the following prophecies, to put an end to the afflicted state of the church, and compleat their salvation, and to power confusion upon all their enemies, the Lord Jesus will quickly appear with awful majesty to judge the world at his second coming, which will be like the God who makes the clouds his chariot, (Ps. civ. 3) in illustrious clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, amidst surrounding angels, according to his own, and ancient predictions. (Dan. vii. 13. and Matth. xxiv. 30. 31.) And that appearance in human nature will be so open and visible, and so attempred by the clouds to mitigate the brightest rays of his divine glory, and accommodate them to corporal sight, that all mankind shall see him with their bodily eyes; and they particularly, that joined in his crucifixion, (Zech. xii. 10.) and never afterwards looked by faith to him, with penitent sorrow, for the remission of their sins, shall behold him with terror and anguish of heart for having despised and rejected him: and not only the tribes of Israel, but all persecuting powers, and people of all nations of the earth that remain in impenitence and unbelief,

belief, shall bitterly lament their miserable case, because of his coming to call them to a strict and severe account for all that they have said and done against him. Even so it certainly shall be; and all who now by faith look for it, and shall then be joyful spectators of it, cannot but consent to, and approve of it, as righteous, saying, with solemn applause, *Amen.* (chap. xvi. 7. and xix. 1. 2.)

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

8. To add the greater weight to these things, for the terror of his enemies, and the support and comfort of true believers, he, who is to come in all this majesty and glory, said of himself, (ver. 11. 17. and chap. xxii. 12. 13.) \* I am from eternity to eternity, am also the author and finisher of the works of providence and grace, and of this revelation concerning many of them, and will accordingly accomplish them in their order from the beginning to the end; and so may be fitly represented by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which are Alpha and Omega; and he who said these things, affirmed of himself that he, in his divine nature and perfections, is the Lord God Almighty. (see Isa. ix. 6.)

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

9. To proceed then to the first part of the revelation made to me. I John the evangelist, and apostle, who am also your brother in the faith, and in the family of God; and am a fellow sufferer with all those that are or ever shall be persecuted for the sake of Christ, and an heir with them of all the blessings of his kingdom of grace and glory, and am called and enabled with them, through his strengthenings, to exercise all humble submission, resignation and patience in sufferings for him, and quiet waiting for his glorious kingdom; I was banished by the emperor Domitian to a confinement in the mountaneous island of Patmos, merely for my adherence to Christ, and faithfully preaching his gospel, whose name is called the Word of God, (chap. xix. 13.) and for the witness I bore to the truth and importance of the things that I had seen and heard from him. (ver. 2.)

10. During

#### N O T E

\* As Christ is the person last mentioned, and is represented as the revealer of these things to his servant John, (ver. 1.) so it plainly appears by the parallel places referred to in the paraphrase, that these titles are ascribed to him; and as the Father was described by like characters, ver. 4. (see the note there) it gives us a strong attestation to the true and proper divinity of the Son of God, as the same in essence with the

Father, and so may be considered as a description of the same deity, whenever it is applied to either of them, not to distinguish one from the other of the adorable persons of the trinity, as such, but to distinguish the Divine Being from all that are not by nature God, as it is used for that purpose in a description of God absolutely, as such, Isa. xli. 4. and xlviii. 12.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lords day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet,

10. During this state of exile, on a certain first day of the week, which is commonly stiled, by way of eminence, the Lord's Day, for like reason as the instituted memorial of his death is called the Lord's Supper, (1 Cor. xi. 20.) and which, according to the universal practice of gospel-churches, I observed in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead, as a holy day to him, (see the notes on John xx. 26. Acts xx. 6. and Col. ii. 16.) I was on that day in a spiritual frame, and employed in religious meditations and exercises; and, while I was so, the spirit of prophecy came upon me, (as it formerly had done on antient prophets) and revealed the following things to me; which were introduced by my being alarmed with the hearing of an exceeding loud articulate voice behind me, like the strong and solemn sound of a trumpet, such as was heard at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Exod. xix. 16.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, What thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

11. The voice which I perfectly and distinctly heard and understood, said to me, I, that Jesus, for whose sake you are banished to the isle Patmos, am he, who called myself, (ver. 8. See the note there) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress you with a solemn reverence of me, and regard to my words, even I am *Alpha and Omega*, the author and finisher of all things, relating to the world and the church from the beginning of the creation to the end of ages. And he then strictly charged me, saying, Take care that you faithfully record in a book the things which I am making known in vision to you for the instruction and admonition of the universal church; and send such particulars of it, in my name, to the seven most noted churches of Asia, as belong to them respectively, and they are most immediately concerned in, namely to the churches which are seated at the following cities; to that at Ephesus, and that at Smyrna, and that at Pergamos, and that at Thyatira, and that at Sardis, and that at Philadelphia, and that at Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

12. And thereupon I turned myself about with eager desire to see from whence this awful voice proceeded, which directed itself to me, and having set my face that way, I had a clear supernatural vision of a candlestick of pure gold, which may be spoken of in the plural number, as consisting of seven branches to hold seven lamps, answerable to the number of the churches, to which I was ordered to write, and like the seven branches that were made by divine appointment, and placed in the tabernacle of the Lord, (Exod. xxv. 31. 32.) and may be considered as emblematical of the light

light of doctrine, holiness and comfort, which the churches receive from Christ, and hold forth to the world, as they are all one in him.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

13. And as the Jehovah of Israel dwelt in that holy house, and the priest used to stand in the midst of the branches when he lighted the lamps, and particularly the middle one, which went right up from the shaft among them, (Numb. viii. 2. 3. see Ainsworth there) so I plainly beheld, in the midst of these emblematical candlesticks, a divinely glorious person in the form of an illustrious man, which left me under no manner of doubt but that it was the Messiah, who was prophesied of, and frequently spoke of himself, as *the Son of Man*. He appeared to me as clothed with a magnificent, rich and splendid robe, like unto, though of incomparably greater lustre than that of the Jewish high-priest; a garment which covered him all over down to his feet, and was a fit emblem of his priestly robe of glorious and perfect righteousness, which covers him, and all his members, even down to the lowest and meanest of them; and to shew how near the concerns of his church lie to his heart, and how ready he is, to discharge his priestly office on their behalf, he appeared as girded about his breast with a golden girdle of inestimable worth and beauty, far surpassing the curious and costly girdle of the high-priest's ephod, (Exod. xxxix. 5.) with which he used to gird himself over his breast.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

14. The appearance of his person also was transcendently majestic and glorious, like that of the Ancient of Days, as represented in vision to the prophet Daniel, (Chap. vii. 9.) His head and his hair upon it shone like the Shechinah of old, which was always an emblem of the divine majesty and glory; and his hairs appeared like a venerable crown, as pure and clean as the finest washed wool, and shining with a lustre as dazzling as the whitest snow; and his eyes sparkled, and as it were streamed out with light as piercing and awful, as the brightest flame of a strong and clear fire; a lively emblem of his penetrating wisdom, knowledge, and influence to discover the secrets of all hearts, and to purify and refine them, or else to consume them, as the hottest fire doth the materials that are capable of being acted upon by it.

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

15. And his feet seemed to be, for strength and steadiness, purity and beauty in all his ways and dispensations, to the joy of the saints, and terror of his enemies, like solid pillars of burnished metal that had been thoroughly melted and refined, and appeared as red hot as though

though it were still burning in a fiery furnace: And his voice, according to the language of his word and providence, was as loud and thundering, dreadful and astonishing to the wicked; as the roaring of the sea, when its huge collection of waters are thrown into the most violent commotion by a storm.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

16. And, to add still further to the majesty and grandeur of his appearance, as also to shew his effectual care of his faithful servants, he was represented to me as holding in his right hand, the emblem of favour and power for preservation and guidance, seven stars, that were upheld and enlightened by him, to be the ministerial and subordinate lights of their respective seven churches in Asia; which is likewise applicable to all succeeding pastors, as he has promised to be with them always, even to the end of the world. (Matth. xxviii. 30.) And there seemed to issue out of his mouth a sharp sword of two edges which cut on both sides; a proper emblem of the power of both his law and gospel, of the justice of his government and the efficacy of his word, as proceeding from his mouth, for cutting sinners to the heart, and cutting off all superfluity of naughtiness from believers, and for cutting down his implacable enemies. And as to the light of his countenance it was as bright and dazzling, and its smiles were as cheering and reviving as the sun in the firmament, when it shines in its full strength with unclouded beams at noon-day, like his appearance on the mount of transfiguration, (Matth. xvii. 2.) and suitable to his character, as the Sun of Righteousness, that rises with healing under his wings (Malach. iv. 2.)

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

17. And when in my vision I beheld this awful and glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus, I was so surprised and overwhelmed at it, under a consciousness of my own guilt and unworthiness, that all the powers of animal nature failed; and I, like one in a swoon, fell prostrate at his feet ready to expire. He then, knowing, and having compassion on my infirmity, seemed to stretch forth his right hand, the emblem of his gracious and almighty power to revive, and raised me up; and said, to encourage and comfort me, as the angel did to Daniel, (chap. x. 10—12.) Do not give way to distressing fear, as though I meant any ill to you, or to my church and people! No, I, the divine Saviour, am unchangeably the same in myself, in my office, and in my love and care, as I ever have been; and as I have begun, so I will perfect all that concerns both you and them, and all dispensations relating to them.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

18. I am the great and only mediator, who ever lives, as the living One (*αὐτός*) in my divine nature, to secure the interests of my church, and was once put to death in my human nature, to make reconciliation with God by my atoning sacrifice for them; but observe with faith, hope, delight and holy confidence in me, that I am now risen, and live for ever in the nature which died, as their high priest and righteous advocate, and as their Lord and King; this is ratified in heaven, and you ought to say, *Amen*. And to satisfy you that all shall end in the greatest happiness of my people, I further assure you, that, in consequence of my death and resurrection, I have the power of death and of the invisible world, to save or destroy the souls of them that are in a separate state, and to raise their dead bodies from the grave, like one who has the keys, which are an emblem of right and power, (*Isa. xxii. 22.*) for unlocking their doors, and for opening or shutting the gate of heaven, to admit those into it that die in the Lord, and to exclude those from it that die in their sins, and shut them up with the devil and his angels.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter,

19. He then repeated his charge to me, (*ver. 11*) saying, Write all these things down, which you have seen exhibited in this vision, that they may be preserved for the instruction of the present and future generations, and record the things which are further to be revealed to you, relating to the present state of the church; as also the things which shall certainly come to pass, in their proper series, from age to age, till time shall be no more.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of these seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

20. Now, to explain two of the principal emblems that you have seen in this vision, The covert meaning of the figurative representations, which have been made of the seven stars that were held in my right hand, and of the seven branches of the golden candlestick, is this. By the seven stars, are signified my seven messengers, (*ἀγγέλους*) or ambassadors to, or pastors of the seven churches, who have the honour of being set over them in the Lord, and, who as stars, which I have lighted up and taken into my favour and protection, are to shine like angels, in the purity of their doctrine, and holiness of their lives, for the direction of those that are committed to their charge: And by the seven branches of the candlestick are most immediately meant the seven churches of Asia themselves, and, by just construction, all other churches, that are, or may be in like circumstances,

stances, and are united together under me, as their head, in one body, even as the branches of the candlestick in the tabernacle were in one stem, that they, by my ministering servants in future times, as well as in the present age, may be enlightened with the knowledge of salvation, and may hold forth the word of life in their holy profession, worship, discipline, soundness of faith, and moral conversation to all around them. (Phil. ii 16.)

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How worthy is every revelation which Christ has made from God the Father, of our serious humble study, and religious regard ! And how happy is it to understand and embrace it as a certain truth, which shall have its accomplishment in due season ! The records of it lie in the word of God, and are faithfully handed down to us for our benefit, as delivered by his inspired servants.——All sincere ministers of the gospel, who are ordinarily most spiritual, whilst engaged in a religious observation of the Lord's day, heartily wish and pray for all the blessings of grace, with the best of every kind of prosperity, from the Father, Son, and Spirit, to all the churches of the saints.——How august and endearing is the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in his divine being and excellencies is eternally the Living One, and is the author and finisher of all dispensations of providence and grace ! and who, in the greatness of his love, died, as man, to save his people from their sins, and is risen from the dead, to make them, kings and priests to God, his Father, and as a pledge of their rising to eternal life after him, when they shall behold him in all his glory ! But, alas ! for sinners, that reject him, With what terror will they see him at his second coming ! They will lament and wail for all their neglects of him, and for all that they have done against him. In the mean while, the church of Christ must expect to meet with various troubles, as their common lot, for the trial of their faith and patience : But O what rich encouragement have they to bear them with calm submission and composure, when they think of the magnificent representation, which Christ made of himself to his servant John, as omniscient and almighty, as walking in his churches to take care of the faithful among them, as enlightening and assisting their pastors, and as fighting against his and their enemies with the sword of his mouth, till he shall utterly destroy them ! And what a comfort is it to true believers to be assured, that he who died to redeem them to God by his blood, is now alive, and lives eternally, with all power in his hands, to apply the fruits of his redemption, and to order the issues of life and death, and the invisible state, to their joy, and the confusion of the wicked and ungodly ! To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## C H A P. II.

*The Apostle, according to Christ's command, sends epistles inscribed to the pastors of the churches in Asia, with prophetic warnings and encouragements, suitable to their then present state, (in which some things are commended, and others reprov'd) and relating to what they were to expect in a way of mercy, or of judgement, according to their respective faithfulness, or not, for time to come, as particularly the church at Ephesus, 1—7. At Smyrna, 8—11. At Pergamos, 12—17. And at Thyatira, 18—29.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

1. **A**S the Lord Jesus ordered me to write to the seven churches of Asia about things, which are already found in them, and will soon come to pass, (chap. i. 11. 19.) and which they are most immediately concerned in, I shall begin with that, which I am enjoined to direct for their use to the pastor of the church at Ephesus, \* the Metropolis of the proconsular Asia. The things contained herein are dictated by him, who appeared in a vision to me, (chap. i. 13. 16.) as holding his seven Asiatic ministers, and, by consequence, all other faithful pastors, in his right hand of power and favour, to uphold, conduct, protect and take care of them, and to make them, by his light and influence, like shining stars in the purity of their doctrine, and holiness of their lives: and he appeared as intimately present and conversant with his seven churches of that province, as represented under the emblem of seven golden candlesticks, which being a number of perfection, may also be fitly applied to all Christian churches, as the objects of his special notice and regard, to observe and commune with them, to supply them with the oil of grace, and trim their lamps, that they may burn with the brighter light, and to take pleasure in what is good, and correct what is amiss in them.

2. He says particularly to you, the pastor, inclusive of the church at Ephesus, I am acquainted with, and approve of your works of righteousness, and the pains you

## NOTE.

\* Though there were several pastors or elders of the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 17. (see the note there, and on Philip. i. 1.) yet this epistle, like the other six, is directed in the singular number to the angel, messenger, or pastor of the church, because their work and office was one and the same, and so they were all in-

cluded in the inscription; and, perhaps, one of them was most eminent and remarkable for gifts, graces and seniority, though of the same order with the rest; and therefore the epistle was directed to him to be communicated to his associates in the pastoral office, and by them all to the church.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy



patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:

you have taken to maintain and propagate my pure gospel, and the interests of my kingdom, and your bearing all the persecutions that come upon you for my name's sake, with holy fortitude, constancy and patient hope of deliverance in due season: \*And I with pleasure observe your zeal for my glory, and against sin and error, that you cannot be easy with those, nor permit them to continue in church communion, who broach corrupt doctrines, and practise immoralities: and, to shew that your zeal is according to knowledge, you have closely enquired into the principles and manners of those who arrogantly assume to themselves the honour of an apostolic commission; and you have proved that they are not what they vainly pretend to; and have really found them to be mere impostors, that have no truth or sincerity in them.

3 And hast born, and hast patience, and for my names sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

3. And, to your further commendation, he says, I take notice that you have bravely bore up under the opposition of false apostles, and have been patiently resigned to the will of God under all the troubles you have met with from them; and have laid yourself out with great diligence, from a principle of love to me and my cause, to stand your ground against all contradiction; and have hitherto so constantly persisted therein, as not to sink, or be discouraged under the weight of the heaviest of your trials.

4 Nevertheless I have some-what against thee because thou hast left thy first love.

4. But, notwithstanding all this, he says, there is one thing much amiss in you, on account of which I have a special controversy with you, and for which I must sharply reprove you; because, of late, you have grown cool and indifferent in your affection to me, and my people and cause, to the great decay of that fervent love, which worked in you, and discovered itself by suitable fruits and effects, in the earliest days of your espousals to me.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candle-

5. Reflect therefore with the utmost impartiality on your shameful declensions and revolts from your former love and zeal; think seriously how much of the purity, pleasure and life of religion you have lost by them, and be deeply humbled and grieved for them, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in returning to the lively exercises of faith, love and obedience which you honourably professed at your conversion: otherwise I

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N O T E.

\* Christ ordered the seven epistles to be sent to the seven churches; (chap. i. 11.) and therefore, though directed to

the pastors, the churches themselves are to be considered as concerned and included in them.

stick out of his place, except thou repent.

will take away all your gospel privileges, and unchurch you, that you may no longer be like a candlestick, to hold forth the light of truth, holiness and comfort: you may certainly depend upon my doing this; unless it be prevented by a timely humiliation, repentance and reformation.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

But I observe, and own for your encouragement, that, amidst all the decays of your first love to that which is good, you still retain a hatred to that which is notoriously sinful, and particularly, have a high detestation of the idolatrous and filthy tenets and practices of the sect of the Nicolaitans,\* which are so directly contrary to my holy nature, will and word, that I myself also have them in the utmost abhorrence.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

7. Whoever is capable of hearing, and desirous of knowing things of so great concernment as these, let him seriously consider, and lay to heart, the truth and importance of what the holy Spirit of prophecy herein says, not only to this, † but to all the churches of the saints, that are, or ever may be in like circumstances to the end of the world. Upon the whole then, he and he only, who, in humble dependence on my grace, wars a great warfare, unto the subduing of his corruptions, and the temptations of Satan and his instruments, and of this evil world, and so *endures to the end, shall be saved.* (Matth. x. 22.) I will freely grant unto him all the benefits of my purchase, in the sublime and substantial honours and delights of the heavenly state, with an irreversible confirmation in it, even unto eternal life; which may be considered, in allusion to the happiness that man in innocence would have enjoyed, and been confirmed in for ever, if, after having fulfilled his course of trial, he had eat of the tree of life, (Gen. ii. 9. and iii. 24.) which was in the midst of the earthly paradise of God's own appointing and forming for his abode, as he

#### N O T E S.

\* Interpreters are much at a loss to determine, whether the sect of Nicolaitans sprang from one Nicolas; and if so whether it were one of the first deacons, (Acts vi. 5.) who bore that name, and had apostatized, or not: But they all agree, that the doctrines, which these persons taught, under a profession of Christianity, and their practices answerable thereunto, were abominably vicious and idolatrous.

† As this admonition to the churches is added at the close of every epistle

to the seven churches of Asia, it intimates that the things wrote therein are to be applied to all other churches in every place and age, so far as their state and condition is like that of the churches to which either of these epistles is addressed. But I cannot think that the different states of succeeding churches would fall out, just in the same order of time, as answers to the order of these epistles. (See the preface to the paraphrase on this book.)

he has the heavenly one to be the habitation of his saints with himself in blissful glory for ever.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive,

8. And the second epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at Smyrna, another Asiatic city, relating to their spiritual concerns, in which they are to be told, that the things contained therein are his own true sayings who, according to his representations of himself, (chap. i. 11. 17. 18.) was before all things, and will come to judge the world at the last day; who also died for his people's sins, that he might redeem them to God by his blood, and is now risen and lives again for evermore in a state of exaltation, to secure all their interests for time and eternity.

9 I know thy works and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

9. I am perfectly acquainted with, and take a pleasing notice of, your works and labours of love for my name's sake; as also of your enduring severe persecutions with Christian courage and patience; and I behold with tenderness and sympathy the extreme want to which you are reduced by the violence of the times, and which you meekly submit to, as being poor in spirit, while in the opinion of the world you are poor and miserable wretches: (but you are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him*: James ii. 5.) and, on the contrary, I observe, with just indignation, the same, hypocritical and blasphemous pretences of those, who call themselves Christian-Jews, as if they, like the ancient church of Israel, were the only covenant people of God, and who maintain Jewish rites and ceremonies, which are abrogated under the gospel-state; but they are so far from being the only, or even any true members of my church, that they belong to it merely in name and profession; and, in reality, are devoted to the service of the devil, and do his work, under his influence, in propagating iniquity and error, and in persecuting my people.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

10. I, who am able and ready to support and comfort you, under all your tribulations, admonish and charge you, to be no way terrified or disheartened at the worst, that you may still further suffer from these wicked men. Take notice, I now tell you before hand, to fore-arm you against them, that your great adversary the devil, will prevail by his instruments to persecute some of you, even unto imprisonment and bonds, which I shall permit for the trial and improvement of your graces, and particularly of your faith: (1 Pet. i. 7.) and though your grievous troubles will last for a

considerable time; \* yet let none of these things move you; (Acts xx. 24.) but maintain your dependence upon, and fidelity to me, even unto martyrdom itself, and I will make you a rich amends for the loss of a temporal life, by crowning you with all the felicity and glory of an immortal one.

11. He who is willing to know his own state and condition, let him seriously attend to, and consider the cautions, encouragements and promises, which my spirit has given to all churches, of like character with this. (see the note on ver. 7.) Whoever he be that obtains the victory over all his and my enemies, though he may not escape temporal death, shall feel none of the miseries of an eternal hell, which in distinction from that of the body, and as coming after it, may be called the second death, and is worst of all.

12. And the third epistle, which I was ordered to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at Pergamos, another city of Asia, in which he says, the following things are what I speak, who appeared in vision, (chap. i. 16.) with a sharp two edged sword, as proceeding out of my mouth to execute vengeance, by my word and providence, upon backsliders, apostates and all mine obstinate enemies, and to defend those that hold fast their integrity according to, and by means of my word.

13. I am a kind and careful observer of every good thing done by you, and take the more special notice of it, to your commendation, and my own glory, as I perfectly know, that you are situated in the most insnaring and dangerous circumstances amongst a people, and under civil governors, that are, as it were, the throne (*θρόνος*) on which Satan sits and rules with uncommon sway; and yet, through my superior influence, you continue steadfast in your holy profession of my name, and have not departed from, much less renounced my gospel, nor your humble dependence upon me; no,

not

#### N O T E.

\* It is very uncertain to what precise period these ten days are to be referred; whether in the sense of a natural day, or of a day for a year; whether with some, to the persecution under Dioclesian; or, with others, to that under Trajan; or, with others, to the ten heathen persecutions. But as ten is a number of multitude, and all unites end in ten; and it is often used in Scripture indefinitely, sometimes for many. (See

Gen. xxi. 7. 41. 1 Sam. i. 8. Job xix. 3. and Eccles. vii. 19) and at others for few, (see Gen. xxiv. 55. Lev. xxvi. 26. Amos v. 3. and vi. 9) a certain number being put for an uncertain; I therefore hesitate to think, upon the whole, that ten is not here to be taken literally for that exact number either of days or years, but for an indefinite number of them.

was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

not in those days of the hottest persecution, in which my faithful servant, the well known Antipas, † bravely bore his testimony to me, and my doctrine and ways with his last breath, and with the last drop of his blood when he suffered martyrdom at your city; which is a plain proof of the powerful dominion that Satan exercises over his subjects there, in whom he works unto the producing of such cruel outrage against me and my followers.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

14. Nevertheless, there are a few very blameable things among you, which I have to complain of, and reprove you for; because there are some of your church that fall in with the corruptions of the day, through a worldly-minded and prevaricating temper, like that of Balaam the infatuated prophet, who, contrary to the will of God, and the convictions of his own conscience, used stratagems, and instructed Balak, to ensnare and pervert the children of Israel, and draw them into the sins of idolatry, and fornication with the daughters of Moab. (Numb. xxv. 1. 2. and xxxi. 16.) In like manner, these temporizing Christians, contrary to my known orders, (Acts xv. 29.) go into the practice of feasting upon sacrifices that are offered to the honour of heathen idols, and of committing fornication, as though they were no crimes.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

15. Yea, what is still more heinous and provoking, there are some of you that openly espouse and maintain the corrupt principles of the Nicolaitans, which, as has been said, I have the utmost abhorrence of. (see the note on ver. 6.)

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

16. It is high time for the guilty persons among you, and for you as a church, to be heartily grieved and humbled for, and to repent of, and reform these abominable evils. In case you do not, I will soon come forth, in the way of my judgements, to punish you; and, according to the emblem of the sword of my mouth, (chap. i. 16.) will use my sword of war, and of justice, to cut off those bold offenders, as certainly as a plague was sent to destroy the congregation of the Lord for following the counsel of Balaam. (Numb. xxxi. 16.)

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what

17. Whoever is desirous to know how things stand between God and his own soul, let him carefully con-

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# N O T E.

† As ecclesiastical history do not inform us who this Antipas was, and he is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, we must be contented to be ignorant of

it; but he was doubtless some eminent martyr lately put to death, and well known at Pergames in those days.

the Spirit faith  
unto the church-  
es. To him that  
overcometh will  
I give to eat of  
the hidden man-  
na, and will give  
him a white stone  
and in the stone  
a new name  
written, which  
no man know-  
eth saving he  
that receiveth  
it.

Consider these solemn warnings and kind encouragements, which the spirit of prophecy herein speaks to all persons and churches, that are in like circumstances: (see the note on ver. 7.) To him, who prizing my favour, and relying on my assistance, shall gain the conquest over all the temptations of the day, in which his lot is cast, I will grant the refreshments and consolations of communion with me, who am *the true and living Bread which came down from heaven*; (John vi. 32—51.) and will make him partaker of all the blessings of spiritual and eternal life, which consist of joys that strangers intermeddle not with, and are safely hid, as precious treasures, with me in God, (Col. iii. 3.) and were typified by the manna, that Israel lived upon in the wilderness, a pot of which was laid up before the Lord, and hid in the ark: (Exod. xvi. 33.) And I will publicly absolve him from the guilt of all his sins, and give him boldness, like a conqueror, in the day of judgement; \* which may be illustrated by the white stone, that is wont to be given to such as are acquitted in courts of judicature from all charges brought against them, and by the white stone that is given to conquerors in the Grecian games: And I will give him a new name of dignity and honour, even that of a Christian, and a child of God, and heir of glory, as though it were engraven on the white stone; the pleasure and happiness of which none can conceive, relish, or prize suitable to its worth and excellence, but the person himself who is made partaker of it, and knows it as his own.

18 And unto  
the angel of the  
church in Thy-  
atira, write,  
These things  
saith the Son of  
God, who hath  
his eyes like un-  
to a flame of  
fire, and his feet  
are like fine  
brass;

18. And the fourth epistle, which our blessed Lord ordered me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor of the church at Thyatira, another city of Asia, saying, The things that are contained in this epistle are the words of the eternal Son of God, who is by nature God, and who, to signify his infinite wisdom and penetrating knowledge of all hearts, persons and things, appeared, as with a bright flame of fire darting from his eyes; and to signify the purity, strength and steadiness of all the outgoings of his providence, the firm support of his people in the furnace of affliction, and his dreadful justice in trampling upon his enemies, appeared as having feet like polished red-hot, bright and burning metal. (chap. i. 14: 15.)

19. I,

#### N O T E.

\* Here seems to be an allusion to the custom of those days, in which a white stone was given on the occasions hinted in the paraphrase. (See Dr Hammond's note on the place.)

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last is to be more than the first.

19: I, says he, take particular notice, and highly approve of all the good things done by you, and of all the love to me and my people and cause, which works as a powerful principle within you; and of all the services, which from that principle you have performed for the relief of my afflicted members, and for my honour and glory; and of all the faith, whereby you stedfastly adhere to me and my doctrine; and of all the patience under various tribulations for my sake, which you have remarkably exercised; and of the whole of your conduct and behaviour, in whatever you have been laudably engaged: And I, with great pleasure, observe that, instead of having left your first love, like the church at Ephesus, (ver. 4.) these amiable things are on the increasing and improving hand, so as that your last works of piety, love and obedience are more numerous, eminent and spiritual, than when you first entered upon the profession of my name.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth her self a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

20. But, though I mention these many good things for your encouragement, and the honour of my grace in you; I must, nevertheless, sharply reprove you for a few others of a contrary nature, that you may not be lifted up with pride, or think yourself perfect; and especially for one great offence, in which you are exceedingly to blame; because you too much connive at and shew countenance to a set of wicked persons, under an infamous ring-leader, who take to themselves the character of inspired teachers; but are really of the same vile spirit and temper with that infamous woman Jezebel\* who slew the prophets of the Lord, and seduced King Ahab to idolatry, and practised whoredom and witchcraft: (1 Kings xvi. 31. and xviii. 4. 13. and xxi. 25. and 2 Kings ix. 22.) And these pretenders to a spirit of prophecy are tamely permitted to broach their errors, and to corrupt and draw away my professing people to the like sins of idolatry and uncleanness, and, by all arts of subtilty and cruelty, to seduce them into acts of fornication in a literal, as well

as

## N O T E.

\* I rather think that here is an allusion to the wicked practices of Jezebel, whose name is transferred to these seducers, because their characters is like her's, though they pretended to be inspired prophets, than that any person of this name, then living, was pointed at. However, Grotius tells us, that

some manuscripts read thy wife; (*uxor tua*) and some have thought that this woman was the wife of the Bishop of that church, and was called Jezebel, because she was the author of evil things and the wife of the chief man of the church, as the ancient Jezebel was of King Ahab.

as spiritual sense, and into eating of such meats as have been offered up, and devoted to the honour of fictitious gods and their images, both which are contrary to my orders about the purity of manners and worship. (Acts xv. 29.)

21. And though I have hitherto bore long with these Jezebel-like seducers, that they may have means and opportunities for conviction, repentance and reformation of their crimes; yet they continued to be hardened and impenitent, and still persisted in their evil courses.

22. But as certainly as the threatening, which the Lord denounced against Jezebel, was executed after some time, in her tremendous death; (1 Kings xxi. 23. and 2 Kings ix. 36.) so, be it known to these corrupters of the Christian faith and practice, that in due season I will severely punish them, as persons, whom in my wrath I will bring to a painful, sick, and death-bed; and will inflict like dreadful calamities upon all those who suffer themselves to be seduced into the commission of the same adulterous and idolatrous iniquities with them, unless it be prevented by a timely repentance and forsaking of the evil of their doings.

23. And as the sons of that wicked king Ahab were slain, according to the Lord's threatening to bring evil upon his house, for the iniquities which he was drawn into by Jezebel's enticements; (1 Kings xxi. 29. and 2 Kings x. 6. 7. 10. 11.) so surely will I bring utter destruction upon the disciples and followers of these depravers of the Christian doctrine and manners, as well as upon themselves; and will do it in such exemplary executions, as shall convince all the churches, which know or hear of it, that I am indeed a divine person, whose prerogative it is to look into the secret thoughts of all men's hearts, (Acts i. 24. compared with 1 Kings viii. 39) and search out all the hypocrisy that lurks in their inmost parts, in their principles, motives and ends; and I will deal impartially with every one of you, who make a profession of my name, as well as with all others, according to the nature and degree of your doings, whether they be good or bad.

24. But I assure you for the encouragement of the faithful among you, and of all others in Thyatira, tho' not actually members of your church, even every one that has not fallen in with, but heartily opposed and rejected the above-mentioned pernicious doctrine, and has not consented to or approved, much less given into the practice of the diabolical delusions, which these

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine and which have not known the depths of Satan,



as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden.

impostors propagate, with the deepest intrigue and subtilty under Satan's influence; and which they boast of as the product of profound knowledge and wisdom, while they are indeed mysteries of iniquity; I say to you, who are my faithful servants, that I will put no further injunctions or restraints upon you, than still to keep clear of these abominations; nor the burden of any more mysteries, laws, or ceremonies, than are already established in my word.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

25. I only insist upon it, that ye still persevere in, and stedfastly maintain your faith, love and obedience, together with the purity of the doctrines and precepts, which ye have already received from me, and not count them grievous, till I shall come the second time to your salvation.

26 And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

26. And whoever he be that, on these encouragements, stands his ground against, and comes off victorious, over all temptations to the contrary, and perseveres in the faith and holiness of the gospel to the end of his warfare, I will make him a sharer in my conquests, and he shall have dominion over all the wicked of the nations in the morning of the resurrection. (Pl. xlix. 14.)

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I received of my Father.

27. And as in my office-capacity, in which I am constituted king of the church, I have received a grant, with full power and authority from my heavenly Father, to have the heathen for mine inheritance, and to break my obstinate enemies among them, as with a rod of iron, and dash them to pieces as a potter's vessel; (Pl. ii. 6. 8. 9.) so I will give power to every subject of my kingdom, as acting under me, and by my assistance and authority, to prevail against them to their utter confusion. (Pl. xlix. 14.)

28 And I will give him the morning star.

28. And I will give him all the light and grace, comforts and enjoyments, that are to be found in me, who am, for excellence and delight, the bright and morning Star, (chap. xii. 11.) and the Sun of Righteousness, who hath arose with healing in my wings; (Malac. iv. 2.) and he, enlightened with my glory, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. xiii. 3.)

29 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the church.

29. Let every one that is desirous to know his sin and danger, and the ground of his hope, carefully attend unto, and reflect upon what the spirit of prophecy says, in a way of promise, as well as of threatening, not only to this church, but to all the churches of this day, and to the end of the world, whose case is, or ever may be, like theirs. (see the note on ver. 7.)

## RECOLLECTIONS.

How imperfect as to purity and prosperity are the churches of Christ on earth ! Though there are many excellent things found in them, there are others to be blamed, as in all these churches, except that of Smyrna, which was infested with Satanical enemies, and, doubtless, had its sins of infirmities, though the love of Christ cast a mantle over them. How critical, penetrating, and truly divine, is the knowledge that Christ has of all his churches ! His eyes are like a flame of fire, and he searches the secrets of all their hearts. How kind and condescending is the notice he takes of all their graces, services, and sufferings for his sake ; of their hating what he hates ; of their opposition to sin and error ; and of every good thing that is found in them ! He admonishes them not to be afraid of the worst, and to hold fast what they have of the best, that belongs to their profession of his name. He dwells in the midst of them, and holds their ministers, as stars in his right hand : He is the beginner and perfecter of all that concerns them ; and as he died, so he ever lives for them. How compassionately does he remind them of their falls, and of the declensions of their first love and zeal, and call them to repentance and reformation ! But how awful are his threatenings, in case of their persisting in any corrupt principles or practices, relating to doctrine, worship, or manners, like idolatry and fornication ! He will surely ere long fight against them, as with the sword of his mouth, and unchurch them. And, alas ! how tremendous will the executions of his wrath be upon impostors and hypocritical professors, and upon all his malicious and obstinate enemies ! Whatever their boasts of deep understanding be, they act under the powerful and crafty influence of the devil, and do his work, in seducing the unwary, and in persecuting the faithful servants of Christ. He, whose feet are like burning and shining brass, will trample them in his righteous anger, till he bring them and their adherents to utter destruction. But O how encouraging and animating are his promises to his people that war a good warfare in his name and strength, against all his and their spiritual enemies, unto victory over them ! He will give them all refreshments and delights, in partaking of his fruits, as the hidden manna, and tree of life in the heavenly paradise ; will secure them from all the miseries of the second death ; will put a crown of immortal glory on their heads ; and will give them the noblest pleasure, which they themselves only can be conscious of, as being like the new name, and white stone, which no man knows but he that has it ; and which, at length, shall shine in all the lustre derived from him, who is the bright and Morning Star. May every one, that is concerned about his own salvation, seriously consider all awful and comfortable things, with a reference to himself, as far as they are applicable to his own case, that he may not be confounded ; but may have boldness in the day of judgement, when Christ will render to every one according to the kind and degree of his works.

## C H A P. III.

*Here follow three other epistles containing warnings and threatenings, exhortations, encouragements, and promises, suitable to the state of the church at Sardis, 1—6. at Philadelphia, 7—13. and at Laodicea, 14—22.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**nd unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

1. **T**HE fifth epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at Sardis, another city of Asia, for their use. The things contained herein are the immediate dictates of that divine person, who, as mediator, has an allfulness of the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, with authority to distribute them in their utmost perfection and variety, (chap. i. 4. see the paraphrase there,) and who holds his ministering servants like stars in his right hand, under his direction, disposal, care, and government; (chap. i. 16.) he says to you in particular, which is likewise applicable to all others of your state and character, I perfectly see through all the specious appearances of your external behaviour and forms of religion, as though you were alive to God and spiritual things, which gives you a reputation for saints among men; and at the same time, I know that too many of you are still dead in trespasses and sins; \* and that others of you are grown very dead, dull, and lifeless in the frame of your hearts, and manner of performing religious duties, especially when you are alone, and no eye of man is upon you.

2. Take heed of such a stupid temper: Watch carefully against it, and make use of all means of grace, in humble dependence on me, who have the seven spirits, (ver. 1.) to render them effectual, that you may derive light and influence from me for adding strength and vigour to the small remains of those good things, that are in some of you; but are so weak and languishing, as to be on the very point of expiring, unless revived by fresh recruits: For, by the search which I have made into your hearts and ways, I find such woeful defects

## N O T E.

\* It appears from ver. 4. that there were some sincere and eminent believers in this church, though the greater part of them were not what they appeared to be; but were either inwardly decaying, as to vital religion; or utterly destitute

of the grace of God, while having no form of godliness, they denied the power of it, like those whom the Apostle speaks of. 2 Tim. iii. 5. This points to persons of both these characters.

fects in your performances, as render them unfit to be acceptable in the sight of God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

3. As ever therefore you would make a right judgement of your state, call to mind and seriously reflect upon the doctrine of my gospel, and the manner in which you at first received it, and heard the preaching of it; whether it were in faith and love, whereby it was rooted in your hearts, or were only with some sudden impression and flights of affection, which soon wore off again: And so far as it was according to the truth of the gospel, and was entertained with a sincere faith, do not give it up, but keep it with the utmost care in your religious regard and conformity to it; but so far as it was only in a notional and superficial manner, or as you have lost much of the life and power with which you at first received it, be deeply humbled before God in penitential reflections upon it, and rest not satisfied till those defects be rectified; for if you continue careless and unconcerned about these things, which so nearly affect your salvation, and do not awake out of your lethargic temper to watch against it, I will certainly break in upon you with my terrors, in the way of my judgements, as suddenly and unexpectedly, and with as much surprize to your loss and damage, as a thief doth into a house, at a time when the master least of all thinks of it. (Matth. xxiv. 42---44. and 1 Thess. v. 2. 3.)

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

4. There are indeed a few persons of eminence which are known to me as by name, even in the church at Sardis (corrupt and degenerate as it is) who have not contracted the defilements of error and immorality, that have spread all around them, but have maintained their integrity, as sound in the faith, and holy in their lives: And be it known to them for their comfort, that they shall still be kept close to me, and live in holy and delightful communion with me, \* and shall be advanced to the highest honours: For they are graciously accepted, as worthy through my righteousness, and are fit and meet by the sanctifying influences of my Spirit, (Col. i. 12.) to be admitted to all the privileges and favours, that I will confer upon them, even unto eternal life.

5. Who-

#### N O T E.

\* White may be an allusion to the white robes which the priests used to wear, in token of their acceptance and sanctity, when they ministered before

the Lord; or to the white robes of princes and conquerors, in token of their high honour and joyful triumph;

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

5. Whoever he be that overcomes all temptations, especially in a dissolute and apostatizing age like this, shall shine in splendid robes of righteousness, light and glory, that are *washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*; (chap. vii. 14.) and I will be so far from striking him out (according to what he may sometimes fear) from the register of eternal life, in which his name is, as it were enrolled as a citizen and heir of heaven, among the chosen of God before all worlds, that I will publicly own him for mine, whom the Father has given me, and I have redeemed by my own blood, and who has, under the influence of my grace, bravely confessed me before men, in the worst of times; and I will shew my approbation of him in the presence of my heavenly Father and of his holy angels, when I shall come in all my glory to the judgement of the great day. (Matth. x. 32. and Luke xii. 8.)

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

6. He that is desirous to know the state of his own soul before God, let him impartially consider, and compare himself with what the Holy Spirit of prophecy herein speaks to all the churches, which are, or ever may be in circumstances like this of Sardis, (see the note on chap. i. 9.) that he may see what part of it belongs peculiarly to himself, and be suitably affected with it.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth:

7. And the sixth epistle which Christ commanded me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor of the church at Philadelphia, and is for the instruction of all others, whose case may be like theirs, he, who says the things contained herein, is essentially and infinitely holy in his divine nature, unspottedly holy in his human nature; he is also communicatively holy in his office, and perfectly holy in all his dispensations; and is invariably truth in himself, infallibly true in his declarations, threatenings and promises, and is the truth or substance of all types and prophecies relating to him, who also has the government of the church, and the world upon his shoulders, as the Son of David, who succeeds, in a spiritual sense, to the throne and dominion of his house and kingdom, (Isa. xxii. 22.) and has the power of life and death, and of heaven and of hell, the doors of which he authoritatively and effectually opens; and when he does so, (*etc.*) no creature in heaven, earth, or hell can possibly shut them; and when he shuts them against those that would be glad to go to heaven, or shuts them upon those that are forced to go

to hell, none can open them either to let them into heaven, or to deliver them out of hell.

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

8. I am perfectly apprised, and approve of the true nature, tendency and design, and of the principles and manner of your religious services. Behold, with humble admiration and praise, I have opened to you a door of opportunity for my word to have free course and be glorified; (2 Thess. iii. 1.) and none of its enemies, (*vultus*) whether men or devils, shall be permitted to have power to defeat it; because, though you are not so eminent for light, grace and holiness, nor so proficient therein answerable to your advantages, as some other first rate Christians are; yet I kindly observe, that you have some small degree of these excellent attainments in sincerity and truth; and have faithfully maintained the doctrines of my gospel, together with my institutions and commands; and have not renounced your holy profession of my name, as your only Lord and Saviour, notwithstanding all the temptations you have been under so to do.

9 Behold, I will come to them out of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

9. Take notice farther, for your comfort and encouragement, that I will give you victory over them, who serve Satan's interests as a company of his devoted servants, that live and act under his influence, and at the same time profess themselves to be Jewish Christians, but are evidently proved by their principles and practices to be false pretenders to that character: observe, I say, that I will constrain them to come before you with confessions of their errors, and to sit down at your feet, like humble disciples, to receive your instructions, and prostrate themselves in your presence, though not with religious homage of you, yet to pay it to me, as your Lord and Saviour; and they shall be forced to acknowledge, that I have a peculiar favour for you, as the objects of my special love.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

10. Since, in obedience to my command, you have hitherto patiently endured persecutions for my sake, and in conformity to my patience in sufferings, and have preserved your integrity in faithfully adhering to the pure doctrine of the gospel, which is continued in my great long-suffering and patience to a sinful world, and teaches patience under all tribulations, I assure you, for your further encouragement, that I also, on my part will certainly preserve you from apostacy in the still more trying days of yet sorer troubles and afflictions; which, by divine permission, will come, not upon you only, but upon all the professors of my name throughout

out the Roman empire, \* for their trial who dwell therein, that the approved may be made manifest, and openly distinguished from others who will turn apostates.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

11. To support you under these melancholy prospects, behold, with attention, admiration and joy, it shall not be long before I will come, like one in haste, to deliver my church and people from all their enemies. In the faith and hope of this, and in an humble dependence on my promised grace to keep you in the hour of temptation, (ver. 10.) hold fast with the utmost care and constancy, zeal and holy resolution, the doctrine you have received, the work of God wrought in you, and done by you, and your profession of my name, that none (*adversary*) through subtilty or violence, may ever pervert you, and so rob you of this honour, much less of the crown of life, which I have promised to them who are faithful unto death; (chap. ii. 10.) and that none may outshine you in any thing truly excellent.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

12. Whosoever he be that overcomes all temptations, I, as his head and Saviour, will fix him immoveably, like a pillar in the church of my covenant-God and Father, triumphant for ever in heaven; and he, like the pillars, called Jachin and Boaz in Solomon's temple that were consecrated to God (1 Kings vii. 15. 21.) shall never depart, or be removed from thence: and, to honour him with the highest dignity, I will inscribe upon him the name of a son of my covenant-God, and of a citizen of that blessed state, which he is the author of, and fills with his light and glory, even the New Jerusalem, which is so called in distinction from, and preference to the literal Jerusalem in the land of Judea; and which is of heavenly original, and shall be perfected in the beatific presence of my covenant-God. And I will inscribe my own name, which puts new honour upon him as a Christian, whom I have dignified with the adoption of sons, and made victorious under my banner.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the church.

13. He that is inclined to hear these rich encouragements to perseverance in faith and holiness, let him attentively consider what the Spirit of prophecy says, not only to this, but to all churches, whose characters answer to that at Philadelphia. (see the note on chap. ii.

7.)

14. And

#### N O T E.

\* The Roman Empire was often called the world, because it extended to the greatest part of the known world; and the persecution here foretold is probably thought to point at that under the

emperor Trajan, which was more fierce and universal, than those which the Christians endured under Nero or Domitian.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God,

14. And the seventh and last epistle, which I am commanded to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at Laodicea, another city of Asia, and is most immediately designed for their use, but not without an eye to other churches in their circumstances; the things contained herein are what he says, whose name is emphatically *the Amen*, as he is the faithful witness, (chap. i. 5.) and is truth itself, and infallibly true in the testimony he bears concerning all things whatsoever, and particularly those which are contained in the prophecies of this book; and he is able to perform them, as he is the author, prince and ruler of all the creatures in heaven and on earth, that God has made by him. (Heb. i. 2.)

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

15. I, says he, am intimately acquainted with the nature and quality, principles, motives and ends of all that you do in religion: whatever your own or others thoughts be about you, I know that you are neither absolutely unconcerned about it, on one hand, nor fervent in Spirit serving the Lord, on the other. I would rather that you should cast off a profession of my name, than disgrace it by being formal and hypocritical in it; or which is best of all, that your were sincerely zealous in a behaviour correspondent to it.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:

16. But as you are very cool careless, and indifferent about things of a spiritual, heavenly and holy nature, and are neither professed neglectors of them, nor heartily affected toward them, the time is coming when, if you persist in this disagreeable indolence, I will cast you off with abhorrence, as a man nauseated and vomits up lukewarm water that offends his stomach. But, in order to your recovery and finding mercy, attend to the following counsel.

17 Because thou sayst, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

17. Because you conceitedly and vainly delude yourself, saying, I am rich in spiritual gifts and graces, and have an abundance of all good things pertaining to life and godliness, and am in nothing defective; and because you are so stupidly blind to your own deplorable case, as not to understand and consider, that you really are forlorn, and miserable, and destitute of all true riches toward God, and ignorant of your danger, and of the way of deliverance, and are exposed to his just wrath and displeasure, like naked and deformed persons, that have no righteousness, either of justification or of sanctification, to cover you.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in

18. I, as a compassionate friend to souls in such wretched self-deceiving circumstances, advice you humbly to apply to, and deal with me, which, in the language



the fire, that thou mayst be rich; and white raiment that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see.

guage of traffic, may be called buying of me, as you must part with your sins, and vain conceits of self-wisdom and righteousness, for the treasures of my merit and grace, that you may receive them at free cost, without money and without price; (Isa. lv. 1.) it being impossible for souls, so miserably poor, (ver. 17.) to give any valuable consideration for these excellent things, which are much more precious than the finest gold after it has been purified by the fire: your being partakers of these is of the highest importance, that you may be rich in faith and every other grace, and in good works, and may be endowed with all spiritual and durable riches as an heir of the kingdom of heaven: and as, in a spiritual sense, you are really naked, (ver. 17.) I counsel you to apply to me for the bright and spotless robe of my righteousness, \* which, for purity and splendor, may be compared to white raiment, that you may be completely covered and beautifully adorned with it, and your guilt and odiousness may not be exposed to the eye of incensed justice, unto your everlasting shame and confusion: and as you are exceeding blind, (ver. 17.) through pride, prejudices and worldly affections, with respect to your spiritual concerns, your only way for a cure is to receive the knowledge of my word, under the illumination of my Spirit, which is like the most sovereign and effectual eye-salve, that your understanding may be enlightened, and you may be wise to salvation.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

19. While I give you this necessary, tender and engaging advice in your deplorable circumstances, you may well conclude that your case, though dangerous, is not yet desperate, notwithstanding the solemn, close and faithful rebukes I have given you: for whenever I see any thing amiss in the objects of my love, I warn and reprove them for their conviction, and bring them under the discipline of the rod for their instruction and reformation, that they may be partakers of my holiness. (Heb. xii. 6—10.) As ever therefore you would reap the happy fruits of my rebukes and chastenings, and make a due improvement of them, you ought to be earnestly desirous of having your heart inspired with sacred love, and fervour in religion, and zeal for my glory; and

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N O T E.

\* As gold tried in the fire is a fit metaphor, to signify the refined graces of the Spirit, which enrich the soul; (1 Pet. i. 7.) so, to keep the ideas distinct, I rather chuse to understand white raiment to signify the *righteousness of Christ, which is unto, and upon all them*

*that believe, for justification, (Rom. iii. 21.) than the inherent righteousness of sanctification, which is much the same with the graces of the Spirit, that are the inward adornings of the heart, (1 Pet. iii. 4.)*

and to reflect with ingenious shame and grief upon, and with full purpose of heart turn from, all your lukewarmness, and every other evil, that is so prevalent in you, and offensive to me.

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

20. For your encouragement hereunto, take notice of my wonderful condescension and kindness, who, after all, still wait to be gracious, and continue standing, like an importunate lover and suitor, as it were, at the door of your heart, and knocking there by my word, providence and Spirit for admission into it: if any one shall attend to my repeated and endearing pleas with him, and by faith open to me, I will make entry into his soul with all my riches of righteousness, grace and consolation, will take delight in all the good things found in him; and will entertain him with sensible manifestations and expressions of my love to him; and so will admit him to the sweetest communion, in which we shall have mutual fellowship here, and for ever hereafter, like that of the most intimate friends and affectionate relations, who cheerfully feast together, in token of their reciprocal love.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

21. Whoever, by receiving me into his heart, shall overcome all corruptions within, and temptations from without, I will own and honour him as a brave conqueror, and will graciously advance him to the high dignity and happiness of sitting with me in my throne of glory at the day of judgement, that he may concur with, and share in the benefit of, my final sentence upon all mankind; (see the paraphrase on 1 Cor. vi. 2.) even as I myself, in my office-capacity, have overcome the world, and all the powers of darkness, and am exalted in my human nature to the highest power and authority with my heavenly father, at his right hand, on his throne of glory.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the church.

22. He that is solicitous about salvation, and would not deceive his own soul, let him carefully attend to the solemn, awful and threatening things, on one hand, and encouraging things, on the other, which the Holy Spirit of prophecy herein speaks, not only to this, but to all the churches, according as they may be applicable to them respectively, in their several generations. (see the note on chap. ii. 7.)

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How different is the state of churches and professing Christians on earth! Some like that of Philadelphia, are sincere, faithful, and thriving; and, though but of little strength, are highly approved of Christ, and honoured with peculiar tokens of his love; whilst others, like those of Sardis and Laodicea, are not what they profess to be, and come under his severest rebukes; some among them have only a name to live, while they are dead: others are under languishings of grace,

as though it were ready to die; and others are of a lukewarm temper, and yet flatter themselves as if all things were right and well, and do not perceive that they are wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But O the important and affecting difference that Christ will make between them! He, who is the author of the creation, has an allfulness of the Spirit, is divinely holy and true in himself, and in the execution of his office, and has the key of government to open or shut without controul. He opens an effectual door for his word to have free course and be glorified; and takes a favourable notice of the lowest degrees of spiritual strength in true believers, and of their steadfast adherence to the truths of the gospel, with patience under all tribulations for his sake; He will bring all the emissaries of Satan into subjection to them, will keep them in every hour of temptation, that they may persevere in the faith, profession and holiness of the gospel, and hold fast what they have attained to, that none may deprive them of the honours of their crown; and he will soon come to own them in the presence of his Father and of the holy angels, and to fix their abodes in the heavenly Jerusalem, as citizens that have the name of their God and Saviour upon them, a most excellent name, answerable to the eternal record of their names in the book of life, which shall never be blotted out; and they shall be deemed worthy to shine in priestly and royal robes of light and glory, and shall sit with their head and Saviour on his heavenly throne.—But how dreadful is the case of formal and hypocritical, cool and indolent professors! Christ is fully acquainted with, and resents all the secret treachery and indifference of their hearts; and, unless cured by his grace, will cast them off with abhorrence, and come upon them to their terrible surprise, like a thief in the night, before they are aware: But, in the mean while, how astonishing and endearing are his patience, condescension and mercy, even to such as these! He calls them to serious reflection and repentance; counsels them to come by faith to him, that he may enrich them with his precious gifts and graces; may adorn them with his glorious robe of righteousness; and may bring them out of darkness into marvellous light: His very rebukes and chastisements are designed and blessed, for this purpose, to those whom he loves: and he graciously waits, in the ministrations of his word and motions of his Spirit, to gain admission into their hearts, and to encourage their opening to him, promises that he will thereupon manifest his love to them, and hold delightful communion with them, which shall begin in this world, and be perfected in heaven. May we severally consider how far, either these comfortable, or terrible things belong to us! And may the Holy Spirit, who speaks them in his word, speak them to saving purpose in our hearts!

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## CHAP. IV.

*The apostle having finished the epistolary part of his revelation relating to the then present and near approaching state of the seven churches of Asia, proceeds to open the prophetic scene, which was represented to him in another vision, relating to the more general affairs of the church for times to come to the end of the world; and as he introduces the former with his vision of Christ, (chap. i.) he introduces this with his vision of God the Creator, as on his glorious throne, surrounded with a heavenly host, which he saw under the emblems of twenty-four elders, and four living creatures, 1—7. and with their and the holy angels songs which he heard, 8—11.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**FTER this I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat, was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

**A**FTER having been led into the foregoing vision, and received the directions, which I was to send to the seven churches of Asia, I was favoured with another visionary representation of an opening into heaven, (see the note on Acts vii. 55. 56.) that I might observe what passed there. And the first voice, which was now directed to me from the Lord Jesus, as in the former vision, (chap. i. 10. 11.) was, for its solemnity and loudness like the sound of a trumpet, after the manner of that, which was heard at the delivering of the law on mount Sinai. This voice of Christ ordered me to draw near and come up to him, and said, I will reveal to you the operations of Providence relating to my church and its enemies, which shall take place hereafter, and a regular succession of events, to the consummation of all things.

2. And presently thereupon I again, as before, (chap. i. 10.) fell into a holy rapture, or supernatural ecstasy, like those of the apostles Peter and Paul, (Acts x. 10. 11. and 2 Cor. xii. 2. 3. see the note there,) under the immediate illumination and conduct of the Spirit of prophecy; and as the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, saw in their visions a representation of the Lord, as *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up*; or *saw the likeness of a throne, as a fiery flame, on which the Ancient of Days sat*; (Isa. vi. 1. Ezek. x. 1. and Dan. vii. 9.) so the prophetic vision clearly exhibited to my sight a majestic, awful and glorious throne, established and exalted in heaven; and I saw an emblem of the Creator and Governor of the world, (ver. 11.) as seated with august majesty and grandeur, not in human form, but in an illustrious symbolical appearance upon his imperial throne, *whose kingdom rules over all.* (Ps. ciii. 19.)

3. And he who appeared in this emblem, as sitting upon the throne, shined with a visible radiant lustre, like that of sparkling precious stones, such as the most brilliant of those which were in the high priest's breast-plate, (Exod. xxviii. 17—20.) and are represented as placed in the foundation of the New Jerusalem; (Rev. xxi. 19. 20.) as particularly, his glorious appearance was like the splendid transparent colour of the jasper, which, being of a glittering white, with an intermixture of beautiful colours, may be considered as a symbol of God's purity, together with various other perfections that are display-

ed in all his dispensations, and of his gracious regard to his people. The appearance was also like the blood colour of this sardine stone, which may be considered as an emblem of God's justice and fiery indignation against his enemies \* : and there was a further representation of a resplendent rainbow, like a glorious arch over the throne, enlivened with a most beautiful green, like that of the emerald, to be the token of God's unchangeable faithfulness to his covenant of grace and peace, according to his own declaration of his design, in giving that emblem of his mercy, not to drown all the earth any more. (Gen. ix. 13. &c.) The whole appearance was inexpressibly majestic, awful, grand and glorious.

4 And round about the throne were four and

4. And round about this imperial throne, I saw the appearance of four and twenty lesser thrones, † on which

P 3

#### N O T E S.

\* If any thing emblematical be intended by the colours of these stones, (as is most generally thought, and for ought I know there may) the hints given in the paraphrase appear as likely to me as any others, to answer that intention. But we may be more certain that a rainbow is a symbol of God's faithfulness in keeping covenant; because he himself said, that he *set his bow in the cloud to be the token of his covenant, and of his remembering it.* (Gen. ix. 13—17.) And the transcendent lustre of this bow may intimate its relation to a still more excellent covenant.

† It is exceeding difficult to assign the true reason of these elders being represented as twenty four. Among the many conjectures I have met with, or can think of, the most probable may be, either that there is an allusion to the twenty four courses of the priests, which represented the church of Israel; or an allusion to the heads or chiefs of the twelve tribes of Israel, which were their representatives, (Num. i. 4. 5. &c.) and the number of which may here be doubled to signify the great increase of the church, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles, under the gospel-state, or that the Jewish and Christian churches are now united into one; or the allusion may possibly be to a perfect assembly or consistory of four and twenty elders as representatives of the people.—But whether we take either of these, or any o-

ther way of judging in so dubious a case, it seems to me that these four and twenty elders are to be considered as representatives of the whole body of the church, rather than (as some have thought) of its ministers or pastors, which I suppose are represented by the four beasts or living creatures; (ver. 6. see the note there.) For it does not appear very probable, that the representatives of the whole body of the church should be only four, while those of the ministers are four and twenty: And these elders being represented as sitting on thrones, (θρόνοι) as the word rendered seats properly signifies, and their appearing with crowns on their heads, (ver. 4.) is agreeable to the common character of true believers, who are spoken of in Scripture, and particularly in this prophetic book, (chap. i. 6. and ii. 10. and iii. 21.) as kings and as sitting on thrones, and crowned as conquerors; and they are called ancients or elders, Isa. xxiv. 23. And, possibly, there may be some allusion to the Roman Emperor, who sat as sovereign upon the imperial throne, and had kings of several provinces under him, who derived all their honours from him in a dependence on him, as in an infinitely higher sense the church does theirs, in an entire dependence upon the great God, who is the absolute and supreme Lord over all.

twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

which there sat four and twenty elders, as representatives of the whole church of the Old and New Testament. These appeared as clothed with pure and illustrious robes, becoming their dignity, as emblematical both of the spotless righteousness of justification, and of sanctification, and of their being a royal priesthood, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) or kings, as well as priests to their God, (Rev. i. 6. and 5. 10.) that hold their dignities under him, and pay homage to him; and they accordingly appeared round his throne with crowns of life and glory, like those of the most precious massy gold, upon their heads, agreeable to Christ's promise to them that are faithful unto death. (chap. ii. 10.)

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thundings, and voices: And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

5. And I saw and heard the most awful and terrible flashes of lightning, attended with loud cracks and rumblings of thunder, and solemn voices proceeding from the imperial throne, like what was seen and heard at the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, in token of the presence of the Lord there, and of his dreadful wrath against the transgressors of that law. (Exod. xix. 16—18.) And as seven lamps were continually burning before the Lord in the tabernacle, (Lev. xxiv. 2—4.) I saw an appearance before the throne of seven lighted lamps burning in full strength and lustre, as emblems of the variety and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which he distributes for enlightning, purifying and warming the souls of his ministers and churches, by dividing to every one severally as he will. (1 Cor. xii. 11. see the paraphrase on chap. i. 4.)

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

6. And before the throne, answerable to the laver or great vessel of brass in the tabernacle and temple, which for its largeness was called the molten sea, (Exod. xxx. 18. 19. and 1 Kings vii. 23.) for the priests to wash in when they went into the sanctuary of the Lord, I saw a bright and shining sea of glass, pure and spotless, as clear as chrysal, which may be considered as a fit emblem of blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and in which all true worshippers must be washed from their iniquities. And near the imperial throne, and in the midst of its circuit, as surrounded with the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, (ver. 4.) † I beheld the form of four living creatures, as representatives

#### N O T E

† The four living creatures, as the word (*ζωαί*) signifies, ought to be so rendered, as in Ezek. i. 5. rather than beasts, which cannot agree to the third and fourth of them, one of which had a face as a man; and the other was like a flying eagle. (ver. 7.) The learned Mr Joseph Mede, Mr Whiston, and Sir

representatives of the ministers of the gospel, and placed between God and them; and to intimate their being sufficiently qualified, though few in number, for the discharge of their office, they were represented as having abundance of eyes, some in their fore part, looking toward the throne, to receive and observe divine orders and influences from thence, and others in their hinder

## NOTE.

Sir Isaac Newton, with others, suppose that these four living creatures are a representation of the whole body of the church, or private Christians, in allusion to the whole army or body of the Israelites encamping with their standards, that bore the figures of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle about the tabernacle in the wilderness. But Mr Lowman has well observed that, as there is no hint in Scripture, or any ancient writers, of such standards in the camp of Israel, so there is no evidence of it to be depended upon from later Jewish writings; and that it is very unlikely that Moses should make any such images, lest Israel should be tempted to idolatry, for which they had so lately suffered, and to which they were so very prone. (Vid. also to the same purpose, Wits. *Ægyptiaca*, pag. 162, 163.) He therefore supposes, with some others, that the allusion is more probably to the Seraphim and Cherubim in Isaiah's and Ezekiel's visions, *Isai. vi. 1. 2.* and *Ezek. chap. x.* and that these four living creatures were representatives of the holy angels. (See his note on this verse.)—But it may be matter of some doubt, whether the seraphim and cherubim, which were emblems of some intelligent agents, were the representatives of angels; or, on supposition of their being so, whether it were any further, than as angels are emblematical of ministers, or of some eminent instruments of Providence: For in the prophetic visions of this book, angels are spoken of as pouring out the seven vials of judgements, which were to be executed by men. However, such things are said of these four living creatures, as torbid my understanding them to be the representatives of the holy angels: For both they and the twenty-four elders are brought in as falling down before the lamb with golden vials full of odours, which are the

prayers of saints; and as joining with the elders, and leading their worship in a song of praise to him that sat upon the throne; (*ver. 9. 10.*) and to the Lamb, saying, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth, *chap. v. 8—10.*) which surely the angels cannot say, concerning themselves. And then, in the very next verses, *11—13.* and *chap. vii. 11. 12.* the angels are distinguished from the living creatures and the elders, and are spoken of as joining with them in other songs of praise, to God and the Lamb, for things in which they were all one way or other concerned. And therefore, even admitting that here is an allusion to Isaiah's and Ezekiel's seraphim and cherubim, (though it be with some difference, as every one of the Cherubim had four faces) I nevertheless rather incline, with other expositors, to understand the four living creatures, as representatives of the ministers of the gospel, who are sent to preach it in the four corners of the earth, in distinction from the body of the church, or private Christians, which seem to be represented by the four and twenty elders: (See the note on *ver. 4.*) For if the cherubim were representatives of angels in some view of them; yet the ministers or pastors of churches had been called angels, *Rev. i. 20.* and *chap. ii. iii.* and as far as I find, all that is said in this book of prophecy, about the four living creatures, is fairly applicable to ministers: And this naturally accounts for the honour of their being here represented as nearer the throne than the twenty-four elders; since they, by their office, stand between God and the people in their holy ministrations.

der part, looking with tender and watchful care over the state and circumstances of the church, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, as pastors after God's own heart. (Jer. iii. 15.)

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

7. And the first of these living creatures, which I saw, was represented with a face like a lion, to signify undaunted boldness and courage; and the second living creature's face was like that of a calf or ox, (Ezek. i. 10.) to signify patience and fitness for labour in the work of the Lord; and the third living creature appeared with a face of human form, to signify wisdom, prudence and compassion; and the fourth living creature had an appearance like the face of an eagle, which has a piercing eye, soars aloft, and is swift in flight, to signify penetration of mind into the great mysteries of the gospel, and sublime sentiments and devotion, together with eminent zeal, activity, and vigour in the service of God.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

8. And every one of these living creatures was represented, as with a furniture of six wings round about him, as the seraphim were in Isaiah's vision. (chap. vi. 2.) The use of which is there said to be, to cover his face with two of them, in token of humility and reverence; to cover his feet with two others, in token of readiness and diligence for executing divine commissions; and with the other two he flew, to intimate his alacrity and expedition therein; And they all appeared in my vision as full of eyes, turning inward to look well to their own hearts, and attend to the illuminations of God's word and Spirit for directing them in the discharge of their office: And they, like the seraphim that appeared to Isaiah, (chap. vi. 3.) are continually employed in their holy ministrations, and in solemn adorations, saying, with the profoundest reverence and sacred wonder, in a three-fold acclamation and ascription of glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as three persons but one God, holy, holy, holy, unspottedly, infinitely, essentially, and communicatively holy is the Lord Jehovah, the Almighty God, who from everlasting to everlasting always was, is, and will be unchangeably the same; and is the creator, preserver, governor and disposer of all things, as their first cause and ultimate end; they all being of him, through him, and to him, to whom be glory for ever, Amen. (Rom. xi. 36.)

9 And when those beasts gave glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat

9. And when these living creatures, the representatives of Christ's ministering servants, are thus engaged in solemn ascriptions of the highest glory, and of all divine honours and thankful acknowledgements to the great



on the throne,  
who liveth for  
ever and ever.

great God, who, as personated by the Father, (see the note on chap. i. 4.) appeared in emblems of awful and illustrious majesty, as seated on the imperial throne; (ver. 2. 3.) and is the immortal, the only ever living and true God.

10 The four  
and twenty el-  
ders fall down  
before him that  
sate on the throne,  
and worship him  
that liveth for  
ever and ever,  
and cast their  
crowns before  
the throne say-  
ing,

11 Thou art  
worthy, O Lord,  
to receive glory,  
and honour, and  
power: for thou  
hast created all  
things, and for  
thy pleasure  
they are, and  
were created.

10. 11. The four and twenty elders, the representa-  
tives of the church, joining in cheerful concert with  
their ministers who led the song, (ver. 9.) bowed down  
in low prostration, and with humble adoration, before  
their Maker, who was represented as sitting on the  
throne, and paid their solemn homage in worshipping  
him who only has immortality, without beginning of  
days or end of years: and, taking off their glorious  
crowns from their heads, they lay them down at the  
foot of the throne, as deeply sensible of their own ut-  
ter unworthiness to wear such royal honours in his pre-  
sence, and of their receiving and holding them merely  
by his free favour: In humble acknowledgement of  
which they said, Thou, O Lord, and thou alone, art  
infinitely worthy, that the most exalted ascriptions of  
glory, and honour, and power should be paid to thee:  
For thou art the great Creator of all things in heaven  
and earth; and it is by thy sovereign effective will and  
pleasure, and for thine own glory, who hast made all  
things for thyself, (Prov. xvi. 4.) that they still subsist,  
and are wisely disposed of, as seems good in thy sight,  
as well as that they at first were brought forth out of  
nothing into being by the almighty word of thy sove-  
reign command:

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How delightful is the thought that a door of access is opened into hea-  
ven itself, through the blood of the Redeemer, to all that are washed in it!  
They may enter by faith, under the Spirit's guidance and influence, into that  
holy place while they are here, till they shall be admitted to immediate vision  
hereafter. With what awful majesty and grandeur, covenant faithfulness to his  
people; and terror to his enemies, together with all adorable excellencies doth  
the great God appear, as on his high imperial throne! And how surprising are  
the honours of celestial thrones and crowns, which his servants and people  
shall be advanced to in his blissful presence, as surrounding his throne of glo-  
ry, and paying their solemn homage to him with the profoundest reverence!  
how courageous, diligent, and laborious, prudent, vigilant, active and cheer-  
fully expeditious should the servants of Christ be in executing their commission,  
under the illumination and assistance of his Spirit, in all the variety of gifts  
and graces that he distributes to them! With what humble adoration, and  
disclaims of merit should believers appear before the throne of God, as casting  
their crowns and prostrating themselves at his feet, and ascribing the highest  
honour, glory, blessing and power to the sacred Three in One, as all things  
were created, and are preserved and governed by, and for him, that he may  
be glorified for ever and ever! And what instructive emblems are all these,  
of what the ministers and churches of Christ ought to be, and do on earth,  
till they get to heaven, and join the general assembly and church of the  
first-born in their eternal hallelujahs!

## C H A P. V.

*In a following part of the Apostle's vision, he saw in the right hand of God a book of divine decrees, which was sealed with seven seals for secrecy, and could be opened by none but Christ, 1—5. He, appearing under the emblem of a Lamb in the midst of the throne, took the book to open it, 6. 7. Upon which the four living creatures and four and twenty elders ascribe all honour to him for undertaking this difficult work, and for redeeming them to God by his blood, and making them kings and priests to him, 8—10. And an innumerable company of angels join with them in another song of praise to God and the Lamb, 11—14.*

**A**ND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

**1. AND** I further saw in my vision of God, who sat on the imperial throne, the appearance of a book or roll, which, methought, he held, as it were, in his right hand, to intimate that he would maintain and execute its contents. This book was full of written records, as I afterwards understood, relating to such important events, concerning the church and the Roman empire, and even the whole world, as God had determined to bring to pass in their order; and it was sealed with seven seals, \* according to the seven principal parts contained in it, one on the outside of each to prevent its being looked into and read, till they in their order should be opened, (Isa. xxix. 11.) thereby intimating that God's purposes, which are as certainly recorded in his own eternal mind as if they had been wrote down in a book, are as much concealed from the knowledge of all creatures till God shall please to reveal them, as the

## N O T E.

\* The most common books of the ancients were not like ours, that consist of many leaves bound together; but were volumes, or long pieces of parchment, that were rolled upon a round stick, in like manner as fiks or stufs often are in our days. This book of prophecy, which, according to our translation, was written within and on the backside, might by a little alteration of the pointing be read, written within, and sealed on the backside, or without, (Isa. 11.) as Stevens's and several other copies read it. (Vid. Grot. and Mill. in loc.) And, according to Grotius, the words sealed with seven seals are a prolepsis; and are to be understood, not as though the Apostle saw them all on the outside; but there were seven volumes wrapt up one within another, each of which was seal-

ed; so that upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up, till that was opened, and so on to the seventh.—And this seems to be countenanced by the opening of the seals, one after another, in the next chapter. For in case all the seven seals had been on the outside, none of the volumes could have been read till all the seals were loosed; whereas, upon opening of every seal, the next came in course to be opened too. And Pargus, after others, conceived that though this book was only visionary; yet it is to be understood as the emblem of this book of Revelation itself, in which Christ was pleased to reveal such things to John, as he afterwards committed to writing for the use of the church.

the writing of any book can be, that is closely sealed up with ever so many seals to keep it secure and secret till it is opened.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

2. And I saw a mighty angel, standing forth and crying out with a strong and earnest voice, in a way of proclamation and challenge to the whole creation, is there any one of you all that is sufficiently qualified, or has worth and dignity enough to unfold the contents of this book, and break open the seals that are set upon it, so as to be able to understand and make known the secret purposes of God with respect to his dispensations, which are to be fulfilled in their proper time and course?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

3. And none (*usur*) in the whole compass of created beings, no angel in heaven, nor any creature living upon earth, nor any departed spirit of the most famous patriarchs, prophets, or apostles, whose bodies are laid under the earth, was capable, or deemed fit and worthy of the honour of penetrating into the secrets of God's counsels, or of so much as looking into them to discern any thing of them, as was signified by there being no one found among them all that could open this sealed book, or look into a single line of it; but they all stood silent and aghast, as being conscious to themselves of utter insufficiency for it.

4 And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open, and read the book, neither to look thereon.

4. And as I apprehended that things of vast consequence were included in this book of divine decrees, relating to future events, which I hoped and earnestly desired might by some means or other be revealed to me, I was exceedingly grieved and burst out into floods of tears, because, in answer to this universal summons, no creature could be found equal to this arduous task of discovering the secret designs of Providence, relating to the church in this world, till it shall be glorified in a better, as was signified by there being none in the whole creation that could loosen the seals, and read this emblematical book, or get the least insight into its records, that he might reveal them.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereon.

5. And while my spirit was thus troubled within me, one of the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, spake seasonably and comfortably to me, saying, refrain your eyes from tears on account of there being no mere creature that can unfold these secrets; behold! there is a divine person, the only true Messiah, who, according to ancient prophecies of him, as the victorious prince of the tribe of Judah, is, for strength and eminence, like a lion, to maintain and defend his property, and tear his enemies to pieces, (Gen. xlix.

9. 10.) and is not only sprung in his human nature from that tribe, as a descendent of Jesse, the Father of David; but in his divine nature and office-character, is the root or source of all the happiness and glory of his kingdom, which was typified by that of David; (Isa. xi. 1. 10.) this almighty conqueror has overcome all obstructions, (*trixare*) and obtained the honour, by the merit of his death, to disclose the divine counsels, the emblem of which is his opening the book, and taking off its seven seals, that the things contained therein might no longer remain absolute secrets, but be gradually made manifest in a regular succession of providences to explain them.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

6. Hereupon I looked to see this wonderful person, and, behold! to my immediate relief and transporting joy, I had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the glory of his mediatorial exaltation in human nature, at the Father's right hand, as standing near the throne, and within the circle of the four living creatures, and of the four and twenty elders, to mediate between God and them; I saw him in this posture of readiness and ability to execute all his offices of a prophet, priest and king, which were represented under proper emblems of them severally. His priestly office was represented by his appearing with evident characters of the Lamb of God, who had been slain, as a propitiatory sacrifice to take away the sins of the world, when thro' the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God; (John i. 29. and Heb. ix. 14.) and who intercedes before the throne in virtue of his atoning blood: His kingly office was represented by the emblem of his having seven horns, a number of perfection, to denote his almighty power to execute the will of God's purpose to protect, support and defend his church, and push down all his and their enemies: And his prophetic office was represented by the emblem of his having seven eyes, to denote that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, (Col. ii. 3.) that he has a thorough foresight of all events, and an unmeasurable fulness of the spirit of wisdom and revelation, whose gifts and graces are under his direction, to be issued forth, in all their variety and excellence, for the benefit of his ministers and people, wherever they are scattered through the whole earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

7. And, as I further saw in my vision, the Lord Jesus came close up to the throne, and received the book out of the right hand of the Father, who sat upon it, and gave the book to him, as a signal of his deliver-  
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ing all power in heaven and earth to him; as his receiving it also was, of his being both able and willing to open the meaning of the things contained therein, and to take care that they should be effectually accomplished in their proper time and order, according to the divine purpose about them.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

8. And when he had taken the book into his own hand, which carried this intimation of his gracious design, the four living creatures, as representatives of his ministering servants, and the four and twenty elders, as representatives of the church, prostrated themselves with the profoundest reverence and humility before this glorious Lamb, and cheerfully united in their solemn homage of adoration and worship, prayer and praise to him, just as they had before to the Father on his imperial throne, (chap. iv. 9. 10. 11.) all of which, in allusion to one of the chief musical instruments that were used for thanksgiving and praise in the temple-service, appeared with harps, as emblems of the melody of their hearts, and of the most charming notes in their praising song, and each of them appeared with cups full of incense, ( *θυμιαματα* ) like the typical censers of pure gold in which the priests were wont to burn incense before the Lord, as emblems of the prayers that are offered up by the church and its ministers, (Ps. cxli. 2.) and are made acceptable to God, as presented with the sweet perfume of the merit and advocacy of their great high priest. (Rev. viii. 3. 4.)

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation.

9. And they joined together, as with one heart and voice, in singing a most excellent song, which, for that reason, may very properly be called a new song, suited to the present joyful occasion (ver. 7.) and fitted for the gospel state, in consequence of the death of Christ, saying, Thou, O spotless Lamb of God, and thou only, art thoroughly qualified for, and deservest the honour of knowing and opening the eternal counsels of God, as signified by thy taking the book, and breaking open its seals, that the things contained therein may not be entirely hid from all mankind; for thou wast led as a lamb to the slaughter, and madest thy soul an offering for sin; (Isa. liii. 7. 10.) and hast bought us out of the bondage of the law, and of sin and Satan, to God, as his peculiar property, for his honour and service, (Luke i. 74. 75.) and for communion with him, and an everlasting enjoyment of him; which thou hast done by the inestimable price of thy precious blood.

blood, \* whereby thou hast redeemed not all of every nation, but us from among all others of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, whether Jews or Gentiles, with whom we lived, and were equally involved in guilt, and exposed to destruction.

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

10. And thou hast advanced us to the most honourable relations to our covenant-God and Father, in making us true Israelites, who as princes have power with God and prevail, (Gen. xxiii. 28.) and in consecrating us to him and his service, as kings, to master and subdue our own spirits, and all indwelling corruption, and overcome the world, (1 John v. 4.) in a dependence on him and devotedness to his fear; and as priests to have free liberty of access, through thee, by one Spirit to the Father, (Eph. ii. 18.) and to offer up such spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, as are acceptable to him on thine account: (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And we, through thy favour, merit and influence, shall gain the victory, and triumph over all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, even while we are upon earth. (Rom. viii. 37.)

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

11. And I looked again for still further discoveries of this glorious scene, and heard the melodious voice of a vast multitude of holy angels, which encamp round about them that fear the Lord, (Ps. xxxiv. 7.) and surrounded the imperial throne, and the living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers, who were nearest the throne, (see the note on chap. iv. 6.) and the elders the representatives of the church, who were nearer it than the angels themselves: These joined in harmonious concert with them, to express their praises, as they also were confirmed by Christ, and rejoiced in his favour to men; (see Luke ii. 13. 14. Eph. 3. 10. and 1 Pet. i. 12.) their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands multiplied by thousands, (see Ps. lxxviii. 17. and Dan. vii. 10.) yea, an innumerable company of them, (Heb. xii. 22.)

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength,

12. Saying with a strong, lively and articulate voice, with cheerful hearts, and lofty notes of joy and praise, infinitely and only worthy is this exalted Lamb of all the honours, not only of his divine person, but also of his mediatorial office, who was slain in offering up himself to God a sacrifice for sin, that the general assembly and church of the first-born may be joined to the angelic

#### N O T E.

\* The redemption here spoken of is that which Christ made by his blood, and is said to be out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, which

carries the strongest intimation, that he paid the price of redemption, not for every individual of them, but for some from among them all.

and honour,  
and glory and  
blessing.

gelic quire in heaven. (Heb. xii. 23.) He undoubtedly deserves to receive all grateful acknowledgements and high ascriptions of universal authority and dominion over all, and of inexhaustible riches of grace and glory, and of unsearchable wisdom and invincible strength, and of every kind of religious honour, and of all divine and mediatorial glory, and of the liveliest adoring praises, which of right belong to him, who is completely qualified for discharging the high trust that the Father has committed to him.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

13. And methought I heard the whole creation concurring in the song, even all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, and all the separate spirits of the just made perfect, whose bodies are buried in the earth, and in the bottom of the sea; yea, methought I heard all creatures contained in them, and particularly all the sensitive creation, echoing to the Redeemer's praise for the deliverance he will bring to them from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, (Rom. viii. 19—22. See the note there) saying, may all united thanksgivings, and honour, and glory, and might, and dominion be equally ascribed to God the Father, who sits on the imperial throne, and to the adorable Lamb, who is God, and purchased the church with his own blood! (Acts xx. 28.) May these tributaries of praise be perpetuated to them jointly from henceforth to all eternity!

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

14. And the four living creatures, the representatives of the ministers of the church, who had begun the chorus, (ver. 8.) closed it, saying, *Amen*, so it ought to be, and so according to our earnest desire it shall be; and the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the body of the church itself, readily consenting, prostrated themselves with humble reverence, and paid their religious adorations to the ever and only living and true God, inclusive of the living Redeemer, to whom they ascribed equal honours, (ver. 13.) and who is unchangeably the same, in his person and office, yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Heb. xiii. 8.)

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

What a privilege and pleasure is it to be acquainted with the counsels of God for our support under every trial, till our happiness shall be perfected in eternal salvation! And what a grief to have them hid from us! But, blessed be God, that, when no creature in heaven or earth was able to reveal them, the Great Messiah of Judah's tribe, and the root of David, has interposed between him and the church, and has taken the book of divine decrees, by the Father's grant, into his hand, and has loosed the seals thereof, to lay them open, and to fulfil them in their season. He is worthy of the most grateful ac-

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knowledge and honours on his own account, and on account of his meritorious death, whereby he, as mediator, obtained authority for this important work. How awful and majestic is his character, as a lion to tear his enemies to pieces, and defend his people from their rage against them! And how endearing, as a lamb for meekness, that was led to the slaughter, and died a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for them, whom he redeemed by his precious blood as a peculiar people, and has dignified with the honour of kings and priests to God, in distinction from the rest of mankind, throughout the world, of what nation, or kindred after the flesh, soever they be! O the divine adorations and worship, and songs of praise, that are and ought to be offered to him, together with God the Father, by all his ministering servants, and the whole church! The innumerable company of angels delight to join with them, in ascribing all blessing, honour, glory and power equally to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, as the same God with him, and as sustaining their proper parts in the oeconomy of salvation, that they may be jointly glorified for ever. May all creatures in heaven and earth concur herein, and cheerfully say, Amen!

## C H A P. VI

*The apostle goes on to an account of the opening of the seals in their order, for revealing the purposes of God that are to be fulfilled by his providence in seven grand successive periods; the first of which is represented in the opening of the six first seals, and relates to the state of the church under the Heathen emperors of Rome, from the time of this prophecy to Constantine the Great, about the year of our Lord 323.—The first seal is opened, relating to the glorious success of the gospel in the first promulgation of it, 1. 2. The second relating to a great destruction both of persecuted Jews and Romans, by their wars one with another, till about the year 138, 3. 4. The third relating to great scarcity of provisions in the empire, between the year 138 and 179, 5. 6. The fourth relating to great mortality by a pestilence, between the year 211 and 241, 7. 8. The fifth relating to the cry of the souls of martyrs under the altar, 9.—11. And the sixth relating to the dreadful and total subversion of the empire, as Heathen, in the reign of Constantine, about the year 323, 12—17.*

## P E R I O D I.

### TEXT.

### PARAPHRASE.

**A**ND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come, and see.

**SEAL I.] I. N**OW to give an account in order of the several prophecies contained in the sealed book, as they gradually appeared in the opening of each part of it; upon the delivery of this book or roll into the hand of Christ, who appeared under the representation of a lamb, I saw, in my vision, that he soon began with opening the first of the seals, to discover the prophecies contained in the part which was then unrolled; and I immediately heard an exceeding strong



strong voice, as loud as thunder, which was distinctly pronounced by the first of the four living creatures, or representatives of the ministers of the church, who appeared like a lion; (chap. iv. 7.) and he summoned my attention, saying to me, draw nigh hither, and behold what offers to view in this part of the roll which is now unfolded.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

2. And having come so near as to be able to discern what was in it, I looked, and, behold, a white horse appeared, the emblem of joy and triumph, and of the purity of the gospel, and of all divine procedures: and the illustrious person, even the Lord Jesus himself, who sat upon it, like a mighty warrior riding prosperously, was figured out to my view as having a bow in his hand, like what is used in battle for shooting arrows, a fit emblem of the power of his word and spirit, which penetrates as deep as sharp arrows into the hearts of his enemies, either to slay them before him, or to make them a willing people in the day of his power: (PL xlv. 5. and cx. 3.) and a glorious crown was set upon his head, the emblem of his royal dignity and victory, *who, for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour*, (Heb. ii 9.) and he marched forth in a triumphant manner, immediately beginning to conquer, and carrying on his conquests, till they should be complicated to the joy of his people, and the confusion of his implacable enemies; \* which might point to the wonderful success of the gospel, in its spreading far and wide through the Roman empire, unto the conversion of vast multitudes of sinners, especially from among the idolatrous Gentiles, and the defeating of all opposition to it, in the first age of Christianity, when its preachers went

VOL. VI.

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forth

## N O T E.

\* Mr Joseph Mead and Sir Isaac Newton, with others, suppose that the first four seals relate intirely to the judgements that were executed on the Roman empire; and that the prophecies concerning the affairs of the church do not come in till the fifth seal; and that Christ's riding on the white horse, conquering and to conquer, is emblematical of victories obtained to the destruction of his enemies; but methinks riding on a white horse does not seem to be a proper emblem of only the same sort of terrible slaughter of Christ's enemies, as under the very next seal is represented by a rider on a red horse;

and it seems somewhat unaccountable, that the surprising progress of the gospel by the preaching of the apostles, which, according to Sir Isaac's scheme, was mostly after this vision, especially among the idolatrous Gentiles, should be taken no notice of at the beginning of a revelation, in which the church was so nearly concerned. But it was exceeding proper, and tended greatly to their comfort, to represent the judgements of God, in the opening of the three next seals, that should fall upon those who should furiously set themselves against the gospel, after he had so signally owned and blessed it.

forth with strength and speed, like horses, to propagate it every where under Christ, who rode in triumph on their ministrations, as a specimen of what should be done in after ages, till the whole number of his elect shall be gathered in, and all his enemies shall be made his footstool. (1 Cor. xv. 25. and Heb. i. 13.)

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

SEAL II.] 3. And when I saw in my vision that Jesus the glorious Lamb, had opened the second seal to discover the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the second of the four living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers, which appeared to me like an ox or calf, (chap. iv. 7.) calling upon me, and saying, in like manner as the first had done, come hither, and see what presents itself in the part of the roll which is now unfolded, relating to the next succeeding event of providence.

4 And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and there was given unto him a great sword.

4. And, upon my drawing near, I saw a representation of another horse, whose colour was as red as if he had been all over stained with blood, a proper emblem of dreadful war and bloodshed: And the rider of this horse was represented, as an agent of Providence, \* to spread confusion and slaughter among the persecuting inhabitants of the earth, to the destruction of their tranquillity and safety; and to do this by means of his throwing one party of them into a state of war with the other, that they might slay one another: and, as a further emblem of this righteous judgement of God upon them, a huge formidable sword was put into the hand of the warrior, who sat upon the red horse: all which may be considered as a prediction of the dreadful destruction of infidel Jews and Romans, those common enemies to Christianity, in the wars between them, especially in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, till about the year of our Lord 138, which was a righteous judgement upon those joint persecutors.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see. And I be-

SEAL III.] 5. And when the Lamb had loosed the third seal, and so laid open the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the third living creatures, or representatives of ministers, which appeared with a face like a man, (chap. iv. 7.) saying to me, as the two former had

#### N O T E.

\* It is hard to determine, whether the rider on the red horse be meant immediately of Christ, or of such instruments as he made use of who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; (chap. xiv. 16.) but, be that as it will, if this vision of the second seal was, as is commonly thought, in the time of Domitian's per-

secution, about the year of our Lord 96, (Vide Mill. proleg. p. 19.) it may very fairly be referred to the vast numbers of both Jews and Romans that fell by the wars between them in Trajan's and Adrian's reigns, about 42 years after the vision, (See Mr Lowman's history of this seal.

held, and lo, a blackhorse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

had before, come near, and see what is contained in this unfolded part of the roll, relating to the next remarkable event of providence; and, looking into it, I observed the representation of another horse of a black colour, a fit emblem of mourning and affliction, by reason of great distress: accordingly, he, who appeared as mounted upon this horse, had the figure of a pair of scales in his hand, \* to weigh the corn, that should be sold at an excessive price, as in a time of great scarcity next to a famine; (see Lev. xxvi. 26. Lam. v. 10. and Ezek. iv. 16.) which may be considered as pointing to a great want of provisions; and was another judgement upon the Heathen empire for persecuting the Christians under the reigns of the two Antonines, between the year 138 and 179.

5 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

6. And to explain the meaning of this symbolical representation, I heard a proclamation among the four living creatures, saying, so great will be the scarcity of bread at this time, that one small measure of wheat, no more than is sufficient for a single day's sustenance for one man, shall be sold at the extravagant price of a Roman penny; and three such little measures of barley, which makes the coarsest bread, shall cost the same: † and, as a further token of the scarcity of other provisions, an order was added to take heed, that no injury be done to the olive trees and vines, lest they utterly fail of producing oil and wine for the refreshment of the rich, as bread is of the poor; and so the famine become in a manner total.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice

SEAL. IV ] 7. And when the Lamb proceeded to open the fourth seal, and unfolded the next part of the fourth roll, I heard the voice of the fourth of the living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers

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which

#### NOTES

\* Some consider the pair of balances as an emblem of plenty, and of strict and impartial justice, which was administered in the reigns of Severus, and his son Alexander. But it rather appears to me that it is here to be taken as an emblem of affliction, in a way of judgement upon the Heathen persecuting empire, according to the purport of the next foregoing and following seals, and according to the most natural construction of the emblem of a black horse; and the interpretation of it in the next verse seems to confirm this sense. (See Ibid's history of the scarcity of provisions in the reigns of the Antonines, which began about the year of our Lord 138 and ended about 179.)

† A measure of wheat (*χουσέ σιτου*) is variously computed: but if Grotius's account from Herodotus, Hippocrates, Diogenes, Laertius, and Athenæus, may be depended upon, it is no more than one man in health needs for the allowance of each day. And a penny, which was about seven-pence halfpenny of our money, was as much as a labourer could earn in a day, as appears from Matth. xx. 2 (Vide Grotius in loc.) Several senses, very contrary to one another, have been put upon *hurt not the oil and the wine*; but that given in the paraphrase, which, for ought I know, is singular, appears most agreeable to what I take to be the meaning of the former part of the verse.

of the fourth beast (ay, Come, and see.

which appeared with a face like an eagle's (chap. iv. 7.) calling to me and saying, come near, and see what this exhibits to your sight.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him; and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

8. And having drawn near, and looked upon it in my vision, I beheld the representation of another horse, whose colour was as pale and ghastly as a dead corpse, a fit emblem of death, which ravaged in various forms through the Roman empire, in executions of judgements upon them that persecuted the church of Christ: accordingly there appeared an inscription of the name of the rider, intimating, that he was the king of terrors, called death; and in his train there was a representation of the grave, and of the separate state, (*adus*) into which the departed souls of the wicked immediately enter to be cast into hell, which may be stiled the second death, (chap. xx. 6. 14.) and I saw the commission was given to these formidable instruments of divine wrath to make dreadful havock in the destruction of vast multitudes upon one fourth, or a considerable part of the Roman empire, that extended to the greatest extent of all the known regions of the earth; which judgements were to be executed in cutting off some by the sword of war; and others, according to God's threatenings to sinful and idolatrous nations, (*Ezek.* v. 17. and xiv. 21. and xxxiii. 27.) by a pining famine, and others by a sweeping pestilence, and others by the fury of wild beasts of the fields to devour them, so that they which escaped one should fall by another of these four heavy calamities, and find no place of security against them. \* All which may be considered as fulfilled upon the idolatrous Heathen persecutors of the church under several emperors, whose severities began about the year 211, and continued, with little intermission, till about the year 241.

SEAL

#### N O T E

\* The emperors Maximian, Decius, Gallus and Volusian, and Valerian, were cruel persecutors of the Christians, and in their days the empire was punished, not only with the sword and famine or scarcity, as under the two former seals, but also with the pestilence, which is signified by death, (*Jer.* ix. 21.) and was distinguished from those other judgements, as in the passages referred to in the paraphrase. And it has been observed, that war brings on scarcity, and scarcity pestilence, for want of proper sustenance; and pestilence, by depopulating the country, leaves the few survivors an easier prey to the wild beasts; and so these judgements have a natural tendency to make way one for

another, in the order in which they are here represented; and their reaching the fourth, or a considerable part of the earth, is expressed in the paraphrase to indeterminately, as to leave room for applying it either to a fourth part of the subjects, or of the dominion of the Roman empire, which, I think, is meant by the earth or world in several parts of the New Testament, and in this prophetic book, (chap. iii. 10) where *the whole world*, and *they that dwell on the earth*, are synonymous terms, as they also are Rom. x. 18. compared with Matth. xxiv. 14. and probably the earth signifies the Roman empire, verse 4. of this chapter.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

[SEAL V.] 9. And when the Lamb had taken off the fifth seal, to disclose the things contained in that part of the roll which was then opened, I saw in my vision an affecting representation of martyrs, that had been slain in the then present, as well as former persecutions, whose souls, surviving their dead bodies, appeared to me in allusion to temple service, † as prostrating themselves at the foot of the golden altar of incense within the sanctuary; a proper emblem to signify, that the offering, which they had made of themselves even unto death, for their faithful and professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for the noble witness they had bore to him with constancy and perseverance to the end, was highly acceptable to God, through the odour of his intercession.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

10. And, methought, they, in an humble and devotional manner, cried out, with great fervency and earnestness, O Lord, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and art faithful to thy promises to thy people, and true to thy threatnings against thine enemies, how long will it be e'er thou, in the course of thy providence, wilt glorify thy holiness and justice, and vindicate the honour of thine own name, by reckoning with, and taking suitable vengeance upon those implacable persecuting enemies, who, through thy great patience, dwell on the earth, and have shed our blood for our steadfast adherence to thee and thy cause? When shall the time come for thy putting a stop to their rage, and bringing confusion upon their wicked designs, that they may no longer go on to murder thy saints and servants for righteousness sake.

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until there

11. And hereupon they appeared, in token of acceptance with God, as clothed with glorious shining garments, the emblems of purity, honour and joy, even robes of righteousness, which were put upon every one of them by the free favour of God: and, in answer to their humble enquiry with respect to the destruction of persecuting enemies, and the deliverance of the church from their rage on earth, they were told that

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they

N O T E.

† As the scene of this vision was in heaven, (chap. iv. 1.) the souls under the altar seem to be an allusion, not (as some think) to the blood of the sacrifices that was poured out at the foot of the brazen altar, which stood in a court without the temple, but to their being before the altar of incense, which was within the sanctuary, and so intimates, that the blood of these martyrs was not to

be considered as propitiatory sacrifices, but as offerings of a spiritual nature, like the prayers of Israel before the golden altar at the time of incense, that they might be performed by the intercession of Christ, to recommend the persons and prayers, and religious services and sufferings of his people to divine acceptance.

fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

they must wait with quietness, and hope about it, a little longer, till the number of martyrs should be fulfilled, by the testimony which others of their fellow Christians and brethren were also to bear to Christ and his cause, and seal with their blood, as they themselves had done before; and then the troubles of the church from Heathen enemies should intirely cease, and issue in a state of prosperity and peace: herein referring most immediately to the sharp, though short persecution, under Dioclesian, which was the last that should be inflicted by the Pagan empire; and should be brought to its final period, by Constantine the great's obtaining the imperial dignity, and surmounting all opposition in victory over Licinius, about the year 323.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

SEAL VI.] 12. Accordingly, when the Lamb had broke open the sixth seal, and exposed that part to view which was before unrolled, I looked, and beheld a representation of the most terrible and shocking confusion, as though all nature were in the strongest convulsion, just ready to be dissolved. It seemed to me, as if the whole terrestrial globe rocked and trembled, and were shaking to pieces by an universal earthquake; and as if all the brightness of the sun in the firmament were turned into the thickest darkness, and into such a doleful mourning, as uses to be expressed by one's being clothed with a garment of coarse sackcloth made of the blackest hair; and as if the moon had lost all its light, and were turned into a horrid gloom, as red as blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

13. And, methought, I saw the stars tumble down to the earth from their places in heaven, with as much precipitancy, as blighted or immature figs are blown down from their trees to the ground, when beat upon by a violent storm of wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

14. And, in this figurative representation, I beheld the whole face of the firmament removed out of its place, and no more expanded than if it had been rolled up together like a huge sheet of parchment, and entirely rolled away; and all the mountains and islands of the earth appeared at the same time, as thrown down and destroyed, never to be seen any more; all which signified the absolute irrecoverable overthrow of the heathen state, and power of the persecuting Roman empire, together with the whole frame of its ecclesiastical constitution, from the highest to the lowest degrees and orders of people in it, when Constantine the great mounted the throne, destroyed the pagan temples that were often built on mountains, abolished idolatry and idolatrous priests on the islands, as well as on the continent,

zinent,

continent; and changed the whole empire from its Heathen to the Christian form of government. This grand and surprising revolution was represented to me in a like emblematical manner, as the destruction of the enemies of the church were by the antient prophets, under the strong and striking figures of an earthquake, of darkening the sun and moon, of the falling of the stars, and rolling the heavens together as a scroll, and removing the earth out of its place; and as the destruction of Jerusalem had been described by our blessed Lord. (See Isa. xiii. 9—19. and xxiv. 23. and xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7. 8. Hag. ii. 21. 22. and Matth. xxiv. 29.)

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains:

15. And such was the terrible fright and consternation of all ranks and degrees of Heathen idolators and persecutors at this doleful catastrophe, and at the heavy punishment thereby inflicted on them, that those of the highest authority, even the emperors or chief rulers of the earth, who exercised royal dominion in the empire, and the nobles, magistrates and governors of provinces, and all the principal men in authority, and the richest subjects of the empire, and the most bold and daring soldiers and commanders of armies; and men of the most undaunted courage that feared nothing before, and people of lower rank, whether servants or masters, slaves or free citizens; persons of all characters, ran about in wild despair seeking, if possible, to find some retiring place, as they had formerly forced the Christians to do, in obscure caves of the earth, and in the clefts and holes of craggy rocks, or on the tops of mountains; and so the loftiness of all sorts of men was bowed down, and their haughtiness made low, as was prophesied of those whose idols should be abolished in the days of the Messiah's kingdom: (Isa. ii. 17—21.) And this may be considered as a strong and lively prefiguration of the still more dreadful confusion and dismay that will seize all graceless sinners, of every character, at the day of the final judgement and dissolution of all things.

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

16. And, amidst all this terror and anguish, they, like the Israelites, when God punished them for their idolatry, (Hos. x. 8.) wished, and called in vain for mountains and rocks to tumble down upon their heads, and overwhelm and crush them to death, if by this means they might possibly be sheltered and hid from the presence of the incensed God, who, as sovereign of the universe, was represented as sitting upon the throne; and from the righteous vengeance of the Lord Jesus, for the furious opposition they had made to him and his

cause,

cause, and for the cruelties they had exercised upon his members, whose just resentments, though a lamb for meekness, were now kindled against them, and whom they provoked to act the part of the lion of the tribe of Judah, (chap. v. 5.) by tearing them in pieces, when there was none to deliver them. (Pf. l. 22.)

17 For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand.

17. For they found, by woful experience, that the signal threatened day of Christ's terrible justice was then come in its severest executions; and therefore, under a sense of guilt, they cried out with bitter agony, horror and despair, who of us all shall be able to escape, resist, or bear the fiery indignation, that now comes forth to devour us?

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious are the triumphs of the gospel, when Christ rides forth upon it, with all-conquering strength, to subdue his enemies, and make a willing people to himself! And yet how many are the trials of faith and patience, that he suffers his followers to undergo, even unto death, for their fidelity to him! But they need not be dismayed or discouraged at them! for in a little time the cry of their blood shall be heard, and God will avenge himself on their persecuting enemies.—In what a dangerous state are the opposers of Christ and his gospel! They are liable to be cut off from the earth by terrible judgements, such as war, famine, pestilence, and every kind of violent death. And ah! the consternation, horror and dismay, that will pierce their guilty souls, when the whole frame of this world shall be dissolved, and the great day of wrath shall come! Then all ranks and orders among them, from the greatest monarch to the meanest peasant, and the most bold and daring of them all, shall tremble before the great God, and the provoked Lamb; and they would rather have rocks and mountains fall on them to crush them to death, and, if possible, into an annihilation, than feel the terrors of divine vengeance, which they can neither escape, nor bear. But O the unspeakable happiness of the saints after all their troubles, which shall soon have an end! Though men may kill their bodies, they cannot kill their souls; but they shall go to God, and find acceptance with him through the blood of Jesus, and shall be clothed with illustrious robes of spotless purity, and immortal honour and delight: And when the number of holy martyrs and sufferers for Christ shall be completed, and their testimony to him be finished, they shall join the glorious multitude that are already in heaven, and be ever with the Lord.



## C H A P. VII.

*A pause between the two first grand periods, represents a short respite from persecution, for the comfort of the saints, from about the year 323 to 337, 1—3. And their peace, happiness and safety, as signified by an angel's sealing 144000, 4—8. A chorus of the whole church, with which the holy angels join in a song of praise on this joyful occasion, 9—12. And one of the elders informs the apostle of the unspeakable blessedness and glory of those that suffered martyrdom for Christ, 13—17.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**ND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

**A**ND after the view I was favoured with of the things discovered by the opening of the first six seals, relating to the destruction of the Heathen idolatrous Roman power, I had another vision, in which I beheld four angels or messengers, that were to be the instruments of providence for executing judgements in due season on the Roman empire, after it had publicly embraced Christianity: They appeared to me as standing at the utmost bounds of the northern, eastern, western, and southern parts of the earth, and as detaining the four winds which blow from those cardinal points\*, that none of them as yet might rise and spread malignant influence upon the inhabitants of the continent, or of the islands in the sea, or upon the fruits of the ground; thereby intimating, that as the judgements of God and pernicious doctrines are compared to winds, (Jer. xlix. 36. 37. and li. 1. 2. Eph. iv. 14. and Jude ver. 12.) so their being held back was an emblem to signify, that, for the present, there should be a calm and peaceful state of the church and empire, free from commotions and disturbances by any gross errors on one hand, or oppressions and desolating judgements on the other; which may be considered as taking place, for a few years, after Christianity was established by Constantine the great, and became the religion of the Roman empire, which continued in a peaceful state during his life, from about the year 323 to the year 337.

2. 3.

## N O T E.

\* It is most commonly agreed, that the winds here mentioned are emblems of divine judgements, but the earth, sea and trees are variously interpreted with great uncertainty, according to different conjectures of expositors. The general sense is more easily apprehended, while they are considered as things that

are exposed to injuries by tempestuous winds; and I know not, whether any thing more particular be certainly intended; but, if it be, what is suggested in the paraphrase bids as fair for it, in my thoughts, as any other conjecture.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

2. 3. And, to shew that this restraint was to be only for a little while, I beheld another angel, or divine messenger, of superior authority, coming up from the eastern quarter with an emblem of the highest honour, and power, signified by his having the seal of the only living and true God; † and he cried with sovereign authority, great earnestness and compassion for his people, and with a strong voice loud enough to be heard at the most distant parts of the earth by the other four angels, that had received a commission to execute judgement in God's time and way, according to his will, upon all ranks and degrees of people, saying to them, stay your hands for a season, and execute no judgements on any part of the empire, till we, who are authorised, in our different order, to take care of the saints and servants of our covenant God, have put a seal upon them for distinguishing, preserving, and appropriating them, as a peculiar people to him, and for making them as evidently known to be so, as if they were visibly marked on their foreheads, in token of his owning and sparing them, as the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on the door posts of the children of Israel, and the mark ordered to be set on the foreheads of those that cried and sighed for the abominations in the midst of Jerusalem, were the tokens, by which they were to be saved from the judgments that were to fall upon others. (Exod. xii. 12. 13. 23. and Ezek. ix. 4—6.) By this was intimated that the terrible desolations and pestilential heresies, which were to be denounced by the seven trumpets under the seventh seal, was to be executed upon

#### N O T E.

† This other angel seems to have been Christ himself, who is spoken as a mighty angel, (chap. x. 1) and the angel of God's presence, (Is. lxiii. 9) and is called, by way of eminence, his angel that bears his name, and the angel or messenger of the covenant; (Exod. xxiii. 20—23. and Malac. iii. 1) and who rose as the Sun of Righteousness, and the day spring from on high, (Malac. iv. 2. and Luke i. 78) and came from Judea, the eastern part of the Roman empire. He appeared with an eminent ensign of honour, as having the seal of the living God upon himself, with power to seal his servants; and spoke with the authority of a God in commanding the other four angels to refrain from executions of judgements, till he had done this important work in favour of his church. Now, to whom can all this be so properly applied, as to Christ himself? He

is the head and Lord of all the angels, and is in his office-capacity sealed by God the Father; (John vi. 27.) and he only, together with the Father and Spirit, knows his sheep, or those that are his; (John x. 14. and 2 Tim. ii. 19.) and so he only, exclusive of all creatures, had a certain knowledge of them, and sufficient power and authority to seal them with his Holy Spirit, whereby he marks, distinguishes and secures them unto the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) And as in sealing those that belong to him, he acts in the character of Mediator, and makes use of gospel ministers, in that work, he is fitly represented as an angel, and they may be supposed to be included, in a subservient way of operation, with himself, when he said, *hurt not the earth, &c. till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* (ver. 3.)

upon the Romish antichristian empire, should be deferred for a while, till in that interim many converts should be brought to serve the Lord in spirit and truth, and to make a free and open profession of his name, and should be taken into his special favour and protection.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

4. And hereupon methought I heard a declaration of the number, that were thus distinguishingly marked and appropriated to the Lord; and they, who were thus evidently set apart for him, and perfectly known to him, were figuratively expressed by one hundred and forty-four thousand, a large determinate put for an indeterminate number, as multiplied by twelve, a square root, and then by a thousand, to be an emblem of all the chosen and called of God in that age, who were reserved to him and built upon Christ, the foundation which was laid in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and who should make a brave and bold profession of the pure gospel in the Christian church, consisting of Gentile as well as Jewish believers, which were his truly spiritual Israel; and spoken of as such, in allusion to the twelve faithful tribes that sprang from Jacob, who, on his having power with God, was called Israel, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and whose posterity were the true and visible church, according to God's covenant with Abraham. (Gen. xvii. 7-9.)

5 Of the tribe of Judah, were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

5. 6. 7. 8. Of these there were sealed twelve thousand, as if so many were reckoned to the tribe of Judah, from which our Lord in his human nature sprang, and which therefore has the honour of being first referred to. In like manner twelve thousand were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, though by his iniquity he lost the honour and privilege of the first born, which were transferred to Judah, Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Gad. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Asher. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Naphtali. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Manasseh. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Simeon. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Levi. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Issachar. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Zebulon. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Joseph, one of the darling sons of Jacob. And twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Benjamin, his other chief favourite

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasse were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand.

land. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

yourite son. All these make up together one hundred and forty four thousand, in which account of them, the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are passed by, as having been ring-leaders of idolatry, (Judg. xviii. 30, 31. 1 King. xii. 28—30. and Hos. iv. 17.) and so not fit to bear a part in the emblems of the pure church of Christ. But in their stead, the reckoning refers to the tribe of Levi, though they had no inheritance with the rest in the land of Israel, (Numb. xviii. 24. and Josh. xiii. 33.) and to the tribe of Joseph, the eldest of Jacob's most beloved sons, to whose two sons Jacob gave such a blessing as might constitute them heads of distinct tribes. (Gen. xlviii. 14—20.)

9. After this vision of the peaceful and prosperous state of those on earth, that were faithful to Christ, and marked out as a peculiar people, † I had another vision of the glorious state of the church triumphant in heaven, to encourage and comfort me and all sincere believers, against the greatest violence of persecution, that would follow the conversion of the Roman empire in succeeding ages of antichristian tyranny and idolatry: And I beheld with admiration and transports of joy, a vast multitude, which, though distinctly known to God, and comparatively speaking, but a remnant and little flock, yet absolutely, and in itself considered, is so great as to exceed the power of any creature to cast up, and

#### N O T E,

† The former vision of the 144000 that were sealed, I apprehend to be a representation of the state of the true church on earth, for a little interval then coming on, as consisting not merely of the natural seed of Israel, the converts from which were not so numerous at that time; but of Jews and Gentiles together, though it be figuratively expressed by sealing those of the twelve tribes of Israel. But this following vision, as I take it, is of the church triumphant in heaven, consisting of all true believers of all nations, that either had, or ever should suffer martyrdom for their fidelity to Christ: For it relates to their glorious and blessed state, in its utmost purity and perfection, after they shall have got through their tribulations, when God will dwell among them, and wipe away all tears from their eyes, (ver. 13—17.) which, in this prophetic book is, I think, descriptive of the heavenly state; (chap. xxi. 3. 4.) And indeed all the expressions here used are too

strong and magnificent to be applied to any state of the church on earth; unless we suppose, with some, that it relates to the Millennium. But the distant prospect of the time when that should be, seems not so well suited to support the faith and patience of suffering saints in the approaching and succeeding ages, (which is the evident intention of this prophecy) as a representation of their still more glorious dignity and triumph in heaven to which they shall be admitted, immediately after their tribulations on earth, in their several ages, till the whole number of them shall be completed; when a chorus of all the holy angels shall join their songs, ver. 21. And all the innumerable company of angels can scarce be thought to leave their habitation in heaven, and come down to live a thousand years with the saints on earth; nor is any hint of that kind given in the description of the Millennium glory.

and give their sum total, as they are collected together in consequence of their having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, (chap. v. 9.) out of all nations, and families, and kindreds, and people of different languages, wheresoever they were scattered through the earth. These stood with holy boldness and full acceptance before the throne of glory, and before Jesus Christ, who appeared as a Lamb that had been slain, (chap. v. 6. 12.) to recommend them to the divine favour by his merit and mediation; and they were arrayed with illustrious robes of righteousness, the emblems of honour and acceptance, purity and sublime pleasure; and carried palm branches in their hands, the tokens of victory and triumph, joy and praise, like the hosannahs that were sung by the Jews at their feast of tabernacles. (See the paraphrase and note on Matth. xxi. 9.)

10 And cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

10. And they lifted up their voices with zealous, loud and cheerful acclamations, saying, we ascribe all the glory, not only of our happy and complete deliverance from the severities of persecutions, but from all the evil of sin and sorrow on earth, and of deserved wrath and ruin in hell; and we give the glory of our advancement to all the dignity and blessedness of heaven entirely and alone to our gracious, reconciled, and covenant God and Father, who sits with august majesty on his imperial throne, and is the original contriver, appointer and giver of all salvation; and to the great Redeemer, who was slain, as a lamb offered in sacrifice to expiate our sins, and procure that salvation which is in him with eternal glory.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

11, 12. And methought the whole host of angels appeared as standing round about the throne, and encircling the representatives of the whole church, and of its ministering servants; and they prostrating themselves with the deepest humility, reverence and adoration before the imperial throne, joined in concert with the general assembly and church of the first-born, (Heb. xii. 22. 23.) offering up thanksgivings and praises to God with them, saying, as they had before in ascriptions of glory to God and the Lamb, (chap. v. 11—13.) Amen, We heartily concur in this joyful song. May all devout and solemn acknowledgements and adorations of God, as infinitely blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to others; and may all ascriptions of honour, in consideration of his divine perfections, and wonderful works of nature, providence, grace and glory, and of the consummate wisdom that shines forth in them all; and may all thanksgivings for every favour of

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

a temporal, spiritual, and eternal nature; and the highest ascriptions that are due from angels and men, together with the most solemn acknowledgements of his universal dominion, and almighty power, be paid to our great and glorious God to the endless ages of eternity! *Amen*, so it ought to be, so we heartily desire it may be, and so we firmly believe it shall be.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in whiterobes? and whence came they?

13. Then one of the beforementioned elders, or representatives of the church, came near, as another of them had done on a former occasion, (chap. v. 5.) and called me to engage my attention, and to enquire what my thoughts were of this illustrious company, saying, Do you understand the meaning of this vision? Who think you are these excellent persons that appear so gloriously apparelled with glittering spotless robes? And from what condition, and how is it that they came hither.

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

14. To which I answered in an humble, modest and respectful manner, and with a free confession of my own ignorance, you, Sir, understand these things much better than I, and, as it lies in your power, I should esteem it a great favour, if you would please particularly to inform me of them. Then, to give me a clear and satisfying account of this delightful scene, he readily replied, this glorious shining and palm bearing multitude are the faithful saints and servants of Christ, that have bravely encountered sore trials and afflictions for his name's sake on earth; (like those mentioned chap. vi. 9—11.) and so *through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of God*: (Acts xiv. 22) and the splendid robes of perfect righteousness in which they shine, are not purified and brightened by their own sufferings, or the blood of martyrdom, any more than by their tears of repentance, or their own obedience; but merely by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. Not as literally washed with it, which would have made them red instead of white; but as shed, and applied in its merit and virtue for the remission of their sins, and for their complete justification, and spotless purity, through faith in him. (see Eph. v. 25—27.)

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

15. It is on this account, as the only meritorious or deservng cause of it, that they are now exalted to a state of the sublimest purity and dignity, joy and praise, in the immediate presence of God as sitting upon his heavenly throne; and that they incessantly worship, adore and glorify him, as his attendants, in his holy and blessed habitation on high, which, though properly speaking, there is no night nor darkness in that state, (chap.

(chap.

(chap. xxii. 5.) may be called, their *serving him day and night*, in allusion to the priests and Levites, who continually served God by night, as well as by day, in the tabernacle and temple, (Pl. cxxxiv. 1.) and his glorious majesty, who sits upon the throne, will ever have the most intimate communion with them, and gracious residence among them, to consummate their felicity

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

16. In this honourable and blissful state; they, according to the fullest meaning of antient prophecy, (Is. xlix. 10.) shall never have any painful appetites, like those of unsatisfied hunger and thirst; nor any cravings of greater happiness than they enjoy, much less of earthly things, and much less still of carnal and sensual pleasures: Nor shall they ever be molested any more with fiery trials that scorch like the sun in its full strength; nor be made uneasy, or incommoded by sin or Satan, afflictions or labours of any kind, that are uncomfortable, tedious, and irksome, like the heat of a sultry day.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

17. For as to their not hungry nor thirsting, the exalted Lamb of God, who, in distinction from the saints and angels that stand before, and round about the throne, (ver. 9. 11.) sits with his Heavenly Father, possessed of all divine majesty and power, as God-man Mediator, in his throne. (chap. iii. 21.) He will perpetually supply and satiate them with the richest entertainments, and will conduct them to the fountain-head of ever-flowing, over flowing, and ever-living and reviving consolations: And, as to their being freed from all uneasiness, the great and blessed God will entirely take away all causes and appearances of trouble from them; and as a tender mother, not only suckles her child, but wipes off the mournful tears that trickle down from its eyes, and doth all she can to cheer and comfort it, so their God will effectually remove all sorrow from their hearts, and every token of it; all former grievances being passed away. (chap. xxi. 4.)

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

With what kindness, care, and tenderness doth God indulge his people, by giving them seasonable respites from the troubles of this evil world! Yea, so great is his favour toward them, that, for their sakes, he mercifully averts public judgements from those nations of the earth, that permit them to live in peace and safety; and when, through the corruption of mankind, persecutions and errors threaten the church of Christ, he will take effectual care of his sealed ones, and have a vast many thousands of them, here below to own, honour and serve him. How should it animate their faith, patience, and courage, under all their tribulations for Christ, to think of the glorious, final, and eternal issue of them all. God, in the riches of his grace, will abundantly more than

compensate their severest hardships for his sake. Innumerable multitudes of them from among all nations shall shine in the brightest robes of purity, righteousness and glory, as made white by the blood of the Lamb; and they shall triumph, as with palms of victory, joy, and praise in their hands; and shall worship God with unwearied and uninterrupted pleasure in his heavenly temple above. God himself, as sitting on his throne of glory, will dwell, in the most immediate and delightful manner among them, to banish all uneasiness far from them; and he, as the original fountain, and Jesus Christ as the purchaser, and immediate bestower of all possible blessedness, will refresh and completely satisfy them with the most refined and transporting, substantial and noble enjoyments, ever fresh and flowing to the utmost of their enlarged capacities and desires. And O, with what cheerful acclamations in heaven will they disclaim all merit of their own, and ascribe the intire glory of their salvation to the free and distinguishing grace of God, through the atoning sacrifice of his Son! And with what harmonious concert will all the holy angels join in celebrating the praises of God's perfections, and of his works of nature, providence and grace! To whom, together with the Lamb, be ascribed all glory for ever and ever, Amen.

## C H A P. VIII.

*The seventh seal is opened, and silence follows in heaven for a little space: and seven angels appear with seven trumpets, ready to proclaim the purpose of God relating to the Roman empire, the church and the world after the Christian faith had been publicly embraced, and began to be corrupted: 1. 2. But, before they execute their office, another angel appears at the golden altar to offer incense with the prayers of all saints, and then casts fire on the earth, which produces terrible storms of vengeance: 3—5. hereupon the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets in their order as signals of the judgements of God that were to be gradually executed on the empire, 6. The first angel blows his trumpet, which is followed with a storm of hail, fire and blood; signifying the great destruction that should fall on the Christian empire after Constantine's death till the reign of Theodosius, from about the year 337 to 379, 7. The second trumpet is followed with a burning mountain cast into the sea; signifying the invasion of Italy by the northren nations, till Rome was sacked by Alaric, about the year 412, 8. 9. The third trumpet is followed with the falling of a fiery star called wormwood, on the rivers; signifying the devastations in Italy, that put an end to the Roman empire, and set up the kingdom of the Goths about the year 493, 10. 11. The fourth trumpet is followed with a darkning of the thrid part of the sun, moon and stars, signifying further wars in Italy, that ended in a total subversion of the power of Rome, and the setting up of the exarchate of Ravenna about the year 568, 12. And another angel denounces still greater woes to come upon the earth under the three following trumpets, 13.*



## P E R I O D H.

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**ND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

**A**ND now, to go on with my prophetic vision of the righteous judgements of God, that would fall on the Roman empire after it became Christian, but degenerated into persecuting and erroneous principles and practices; when the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, who had opened the six former seals, (chap. vi.) took off the seventh and last, to disclose the contents of that part of the roll, I perceived that, as in the temple worship, the people were silently employed in secret prayer at the time of incense, (Luke i. 10.) there was a profound silence in heaven for a little while, in humble expectation of what was next to be revealed after the short interval of the church's peace and prosperity, (chap. vii. 3.)

2. And I saw the seven angels hereafter mentioned, (ver. 6.) who stood before God to receive and execute his commands: and there was an appearance of seven trumpets that were given to them, each of them having one, to proclaim the judgements, which were to be executed in seven successive seasons, till they all should be completed.

3. And I beheld another angel, superior to all these, even the messenger of the covenant, the same head and Lord of all the angelic host, that appeared before with a sovereign command over them: (chap. vii. 2.) \* and as the high priest on the great day of atonement carried a more than ordinary quantity of incense in a glorious Angel of God's presence, who in his incarnate person is the gospel high priest, was represented as standing in a ministering posture before the altar of burnt-offering, to signify the atonement he had made by his blood; and then as having a golden censer, filled with live coals from the altar, to signify that his mediation is carried on in virtue of his expiatory sacrifice:

VOL. VI.

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## N O T E.

\* I think what is said of this angel can agree to no other than Christ himself, (see the note on chap. vii. 2) and I am inclined, with Sir Isaac Newton, (see his observations on the apocalypse, p. 26 b.) to understand this offering of incense in allusion to the service of the high priest, who, on the day of expiation, took fire from the great altar in a golden censer, and carrying more than a common quantity, which might be called much incense, burnt it before the

Lord within the veil on that day; (Lev. xvi. 12, 13 and Heb. ix. 4. for this seems to be the most lively and striking figure of the intercession of Christ, our great high priest, who is entered into that within the veil, even heaven itself (Heb. iv. 14. and vi. 19, 20) However, it is of little importance whether we take the allusion to be the daily service of the high priest, (Exod. xxx. 7, 8) or to that on the great day of atonement.

and much incense was given him, to signify the fulness of his merit in the discharge of his priestly office, to which he was called, and for which he was anointed by God the Father, (*ὁ θεὸς τὸν πατέρα ἀνέσχετο*) to the end that he might give or add it to the humble, importunate and believing prayers of all that are cleansed by his blood, and sanctified by his spirit, to render them acceptable to God in his intercession before the mercy seat, or throne of grace; as the perfume of incense which was offered on the golden altar was a typical appointment for adding fragrancy to the prayers of Israel.

4 And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.

4. And as the perfuming smoke of incense, which was made of the finest aromatic spices, ascended up like a cloud to heaven with the prayers of the congregation of Israel, that were offered at the same time; so a representation was made of the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, which mingled like a sweet odour, with the prayers of holy worshippers; and, like the incense that passed through the hands of the high priest, was presented together with them before God, by the Mediator and Messenger of the new covenant in his ever prevailing advocacy, to cover their imperfections and recommend them to the divine favour for audience and acceptance.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

5. And the Angel of God's presence having thus, in his tender love and compassion to his people, sealed and taken care of them, (chap. vii. 2. 3.) and secured a gracious answer to their regular prayers, (ver. 4.) before the intended desolations were come upon the earth; he then, to shew his just indignation against his and their enemies, was represented to me, as taking the censer, and as going from the golden to the brazen altar, where he filled it with the burning coals of this altar, which were an emblem of the wrath of God that could be appeased only by a sacrifice of atonement; and he threw them down with mighty vengeance on the Roman empire, the principal part of this earth, that had corrupted the Christian faith, worship and manners, and endeavoured by all subtle and violent measures to suppress them: and immediately hereupon, there arose a terrible tempest: which produced roaring winds, and loud claps of thunder, and strong flashes of lightening, and a shocking earthquake, as though all nature were dissolving; \* which were awful emblems of direful judgements, that were to be denounced, as what should be executed in their order.

6. Ac-

#### N O T E

\* Voices, thundrings, lightnings, and earthquakes, attended with fire, are emblems in Scripture language of dreadful calamities, which God inflicts in ways of righteous judgment, and particularly in this prophetic book, chap. xvi. 18. and xx. 9.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood:

9 And the third part of the creatures which

6. Accordingly the seven angels, who were commissioned to sound the alarm in their respective courses, and were no longer under restraint, as the four angels were before, (chap. vii. 3.) seemed to put themselves into a proper posture for blowing each one his trumpet in its course.

TRUMPET I.] 7. Then the first angel sounded his trumpet; and thereupon I had a vision of a dreadful tempest of hail and lightening, attended with a shower of blood, like one of the plagues of Egypt; (Exod. ix. 24. 25.) which signified in the stile of prophecy great devastation upon the wicked of the earth: (Pl. xi. 6. and xviii. 13. Isa. xxviii. 2. and xxix. 6. and xxx. 30.) and so mighty was the desolation, that it cut off the great men and common people, as emblematically represented by the blast that such storms ordinarily bring upon the trees and the green grass of the field; which may be considered as a figurative description of the woful calamities that were to be brought upon the empire between the year 337 and 379, by means of the wars of Constantine, Constance, and Constantius, the three sons of Constantine the great, which commenced soon after his decease; and issued in the destruction of his family, and in the terrible ravages, that were made on all ranks and degrees of people, together with the fruits of the ground, and vast effusions of blood, by the northern barbarous nations that broke in upon the empire; \* which might be stiled the third part of the earth, according to the reckoning of the antients, who, till America was discovered, spoke of the earth as divided into three parts, of which Europe was one.

TRUMPET II.] 8. 9. Then the second angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw an awful appearance, as though a huge mountain, all on fire, was thrown into the sea, by means of which the waters of the third part of the sea were turned into blood, as the great river Nile formerly was in one of the plagues of Egypt. (Exod. vii. 17. 18.) And this was so grievous a calamity, that the third part of the fishes, which swam in the sea were killed; and the third part of men, in their ships of war and vessels of merchandize, were destroyed, \* which was a figurative prediction of further judgements, that should make dismal havock upon Rome and Italy, and other parts of the western empire,

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to

N O T E.

\* The histories of the times that correspond to this and the following prophecies, may be consulted in Messrs. Mede, Vitringa, Whiston, and Lowman, the last of which I have mostly fallen in

with, and to which the reader is here referred for these and several other facts under this and the succeeding trumpets.

were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

To And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the

to the destruction of abundance of their inhabitants, strength and riches; † and may be considered as fulfilled, by repeated irruptions of the Vandals and other barbarous nations into France and Spain, &c. and by Alaricus's plundering Rome, and laying waste the country round about it, between the year 379 and 412.

TRUMPET III.] 10. 11. Then the third angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I beheld a great blazing star fallen down, like a fiery meteor, from heaven to the earth, and it lighted upon the third part of the rivers, and springs or fountains of waters: and so exceeding bitter were the fruits of this, that from thence it may be figuratively called Wormwood; and by the falling down of this flaming star those waters were infected with such a poisonous quality, as killed multitudes of people that drank of them, because they were most grievously bitter: thereby signifying still greater devastations that should cut off several of the Roman provinces, and, in a manner, destroy the government itself, the seat of empire, and the fountain of all authority in it; which may be considered as emblematical of the following invasions of the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations between the year 412 and 493; chiefly under the command of Genseric, who came into Italy, and sacked and plundered Rome about the year 455; and under the command of Odoacer king of the Heruli, who again invaded Italy about the year 476, and marched to Rome, which he also took and plundered, carrying away a great deal of its treasure, and a multitude of people; and returning afterwards, retook Rome, conquered all Italy, and, assuming the title of a king to himself, dethroned Augustulus the Christian emperor; which was figuratively represented according to prophetic stile, by the falling of a star, (Isa. xiv. 12—15. and Dan. viii. 10.) and by drying up fountains and rivers of water; (Isa. xix. 4—8. and Hos. xiii. 15. 16.) and which was like that plague of Egypt, whereby the rivers, ponds and pools stank, and all their waters were turned into blood. (Exod. vii. 20. 21.)

TRUMPET IV.] 12. Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw a thick darkness covering the face of the heavens to such a degree,

#### NOTE.

† In the stile of prophecy, mountains are emblems of cities, and casting them into the sea of the most terrible desolations, Jer. li. 25—30. and Ps. xlv. 2: The sea, as a collection of waters, is an emblem of large collections of people into one body politic. Rev. xvii. 15.

And dead fishes of the waters are emblems of the destruction of nations, Ezek. xxiv. 3—12. And so these are proper figures to represent Rome, and the country round about, as tumbling into confusion and ruin,

third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

gree, that the sun which shone on this third part of the earth, gave no light by day, nor the moon nor stars by night, insomuch that all was gloomy and dismal, intirely dark unto a total eclipse, which overshadow'd this third part of the earth, both day and night; which might signify the utter destruction of the imperial city, and of all its authority, both supreme and subordinate, as lodged in the hands of princes, nobles and inferior magistrates under its former constitution, according to prophetic representations of the dreadful downfall of kingdoms and nations, by the darkning of the sun, moon and stars. Isa. xiii. 9.—11. and Ezek. xxxii. 7. 8.) \* and this may be considered as fulfilled between the year 493 and 568, by means of the wars in Italy between the Goths and the forces of Justinian the emperor of the east, which lasted about twenty years; and in the course of which Rome was besieged and taken five times; and all the country suffered the greatest calamities of war, attended with the pestilence, and famine, till, at length, Rome was intirely subdued, and deprived of all remains of authority, and subjected to the exarchate, which was set up at Ravenna about the year 568.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.

13. And while I was waiting to hear the fifth angel sound his trumpet, I saw in my vision and heard, not one of the seven but another angel, who flew with the utmost speed through the midst of heaven, and cried aloud with a terrible voice, that all might hear, and the church might take warning, and prepare for all events saying, though the judgements which have been foretold, under the four trumpets already sounded, as to come upon the Roman empire, and particularly on its western part, for its degeneracy since it became Christian, are very great; yet much more tremendous and ex-

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tensive

N O T E

\* Mr Lowman, in his history of the third and fourth trumpets, observes, that soon after Odoacer had taken to himself the title of king of Italy, (some make it about two years) Theodoric, at the head of the Goths in Illyricum, attacks Odoacer's new founded kingdom in Italy, engages Odoacer, overcomes him, and puts him to death; and so founded the Gothic kingdom of Italy which continued many years under his successors, till it was subdued by Narfes, for the emperor Justinian, A. D. 553, however under the Gothic kingdom Rome, though it lost the supreme authority of the empire, was permitted to retain some appearance of its antient form of government and magistracy. Theo-

dorick made Ravenna the seat of his kingdom; yet Rome retains its senate and consuls, and the image of its former government — A little after the Exarchate of Ravenna was established by the emperor Justin. II. Longinus is sent into Italy. He appoints a new form of government: the seat of government was from that time fixed at Ravenna, and every city of Italy intirely subjected to the Exarch, both in things civil and military — Thus Rome lost all her dignity and authority, her senate and consuls; and was put upon a level with all the lesser cities and towns of Italy, and became only a small duchy of the exarchate," &c.

tensive calamities still are appointed of God to be inflicted, particularly on the subjects of its eastern part, by means of the severer punishments that are to be denounced against them, for their gross corruptions in doctrine, worship and manners, by the three other trumpets which the remaining three angels are to sound in their order, as signals of them; and so he ushered them in with three woes, distinctly repeated, that would fall in their order upon the eastern as well as the western empire; the two first by the ravages of the Saracens under the fifth and sixth trumpets; and the third upon all antichristian nations, eastern and western, under the seventh.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How short are the intervals of prosperity and peace to the church of Christ in persecuting ages! But while they are engaged in humble and solemn addresses at the throne of grace, and commit themselves and all their concerns by faith to the wise, holy and sovereign disposals of divine Providence, Jesus their great high-priest, altar, and sacrifice, as well as the angel of the covenant, presents their prayers in his intercession, and perfumes them with the odours of his atoning death, which is like the sweetest of all incense to take away the offensiveness of their imperfections, that they may be graciously accepted, heard and answered. O happy provision for all the saints in the worst of times! They are taken under divine care and protection, while all the terrors of God's righteous vengeance are coming upon the wicked of this world, and the degenerate professors of Christ's name. What images of horror can be strong enough to paint out their bitter distress! We may read something of it in the striking emblems of tempestuous winds, thunders, lightnings and earthquakes, dreadful storms of hail, fire, and blood, burning mountains, falling stars, and the most dismal darkness, that throw all nature into convulsions, and spread consternation and miseries, death and ruin, among all ranks and orders of men upon earth, especially among those that wear, but dishonour and abuse, the Christian name by their abominations. And yet how long-suffering and slow to anger is the gracious God! What previous repeated warnings and notices before-hand doth he give, by his word and providence, to lead men to repentance, when he is about to come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth! And how gradually doth he proceed in executing first lesser, and then greater judgements upon them, proportionate to the increase of their iniquity, and obstinacy in it, till all former methods having failed of reclaiming them, he makes an utter end of them! But O the comfort and encouragement of true believers! The blessed God takes their part against all his and their enemies; there shall soon be an end of all their troubles, though the wicked fall into mischief, never to rise more. The righteous shall rejoice when he sees, but shall not feel the vengeance; so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judges in the earth. (Ps. lviii. 10. 11.)

## C H A P. IX.

*The fifth trumpet is followed with a representation of another star as falling from heaven, and opening the bottomless pit, out of which swarms of locusts come to torment men upon earth; signifying the rise of Mahomet, and the spreading of his imposture, and of the Saracen dominion under him and his successors in the eastern as well as western empire, between the year 568 and 675, 1—12. The sixth trumpet is followed with a representation of the loosing of four angels that were bound in the great river Euphrates; signifying God's taking off the restraint that had been laid for some years upon the Saracens, and now permitting them to invade the empire again, and make further progress in their conquests, between the year 675 and 750, 13—21.*

## TEXT.

## PARAPHRASE.

**A**ND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

TRUMPET V. being the } 1. **A**FTER the solemn first wo trumpet. } warning given (chap. viii. 13.) of the three following woes, The fifth angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon methought I saw the appearance of a large star, representing a person that had fallen, (περιπατης) like a pestilential meteor, from heaven down upon the earth: And permission was granted him for exerting destructive power, signified by the emblem of a key, with which he might open the gate of hell to let out the unclean spirits that had been shut up there, as in a bottomless depth of horror and darkness: (chap. xx. 1—3.) \* Which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the rise of Ma-

## NOTE.

\* Some make this star that fell from heaven to point at Pope Boniface the third, who was the first that assumed the title of universal bishop in the year 626 by the grant of the tyrant Phocas; and they accordingly explain the locusts to mean the Romish clergy, and particularly the Jesuits. But this order of men in the apostate church, was not founded till several hundreds of years after the time that this trumpet seems to relate to; nor does it agree to the nature of this prophecy, which (as I take it) principally respects the eastern empire; nor to the general nature of the trumpets, which sound misery and destruction, not so much to the true church of Christ, as to the empire. I therefore chuse, with many others, and

think it most agreeable to the following description of the locusts, to understand it of Mahomet, who likewise began his pretences to inspiration about the year 626, and under whom, and his successors, the Saracens made great conquests in Europe, Asia, and Africa, which commenced many years after the exarchate had been set up at Ravenna, and a few years before Mahomet died, which, according to Dean Prideaux, (see his life of Mahomet, pag 70—76 edit. 7.) was in the year 632; and the conquests he made were carried on with great rapidity and extent under his successors, to about the year 651, soon after which a stop was put to them by the death of Othman, about 655, for about 50 years.

Mahomet, and of the irruption of the Saracens under him and his successors into the eastern, as well as western empire of the Romans to propagate his impostures, who revolted from Christianity, and set up a dominion among them by the assistance of infernal spirits, as might best answer their wicked temper and design.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

2. And this impostor, as I saw in my vision, made use of his power to open the mouth of the infernal abyss; and immediately thereupon a thick and dark smoke burst out of the pit of hell, like the smoke that ascends from a large burning kiln or stove, and like that which rose from the conflagration of Sodom and Gomorrah: (Gen. xix. 28.) And so thick was this hideous smoke of the pit, that the face of the sun, and the whole region of the air were covered with horrid darkness; which may be considered as an emblem of the gross errors that would be spread by Mahomet and his followers, to darken the eyes of men's understandings, and hide the light of truth from them, and to destroy all that was dear and valuable to them, in great fury, as the judgements of God are expressed by like figures. (Ps. xviii. 8. and Isa. xiv. 31.)

3. And, to set forth the pernicious nature of this black smoke, methought I saw the appearance of a formidable swarm of locusts issuing out from thence, after the manner of natural locusts, that commonly lay their eggs and breed in deep pits, out of which they rise and cover the face of the earth, as they did in one of the plagues of Egypt: (Exod. x. 4. 5-12-15.) And they, by divine permission, were exceeding malignant and mischievous, like the most venomous land-scorpions, that have both ability and inclination to wound and torment men upon the earth; which may be considered as an emblem of vast multitudes of Saracens or Arabians, that would break into the empire, and especially the eastern part of it, to make speedy and dreadful havoc upon it, according to prophetic descriptions of the destruction of nations by prodigious numbers of grasshoppers and locusts: (Judg. vi. 5. and Isa. xxxiii. 4.)

4. And as these were not locusts in a literal, but only in a metaphorical sense, to signify their multitude and the swiftness of their flight for doing mischief; but could proceed no further than God would permit them, he effectually charged and over-ruled them, by his providence, not to injure the grass of the earth, nor any green herb, nor any fruit-tree, which natural locusts usually love to prey upon, nor to vent their poisonous and destructive influence upon any but those men, whom

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.



whom he had not ordered to be sealed, as though marked on their foreheads, as he had his own peculiar people, on another occasion before, (chap. vii. 3.) which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the special care that God would take to preserve his faithful servants, with their ministers or others, who have the truth of grace in them, to preserve them from the mischievous errors and cruel violence of those wicked enemies to Christian religion, that the true church might not be destroyed by their ravages, nor corrupted by their new impostures; while he suffered them to infect only the idolatrous church of Rome, and to prey upon them.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

5. And as a further limitation of their power, even with respect to carnal and apostate Christians themselves, they were ordered for the present not to persecute them unto death, nor to murder such multitudes of them, as they afterwards would under the sixth trumpet; but to harass, ravage and distress them for a season, which may be figuratively called five months, in allusion to the time of natural locusts living in the summer season\*. And these savage creatures went to the extent of their commission by afflicting them in as grievous and painful a manner, as though it were by the wound of a scorpion, when he strikes a man with his sting; which may be considered as a figurative prediction, that these Saracen spoilers should be permitted to spread fore calamities all around them, though restrained from such terrible slaughter, as they would afterwards make at their next invasion.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death

6. And their various ways of distressing men in those days were represented to be so severe, as would imbitter their lives to such a degree, that as was prophesied of Judah, when their threatened miseries should come upon them for their idolatry, (Jer. viii. 3.) they would choose

#### N O T E.

\* The natural locusts are said to live only the five summer months, inclusive of May and September; and the way of the Saracens wars upon the Empire was by incursions only in the summer seasons, to which their tormenting five months seems more naturally to refer, than to the years of the continuance of their power, by casting the months into days, at the rate of thirty days to a month; and then reckoning each day for a year, the amount of which is 150 years; which some suppose to be descriptive of the space of time from the beginning to the end of these incursions of the Saracens into the empire. And as

this interpretation has something plausible in it, according to the common scheme of the trumpet prophecies, I would refer the reader to what Messrs Jurien, Daubuz, Mede, and Dr More have said upon it. However it is generally agreed, that the Saracens in their first expedition chiefly plundered and ravaged, but did not commonly kill those of the Christian nations, whom they conquered; nor put them to death for their profession of Christianity; nor did they succeed in their sieges of Constantinople and Rome then, as they did afterwards under the sixth trumpet.

shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

choose death rather than life, and would wish for death to put an end to their torments, rather than continue to live under them; but their enemies were restrained at present from affording them this piteous sort of relief to their groans.

7. And so dreadful was the appearance of the forms of these figurative locusts, that they seemed to be like horses ready accoutred for war, (Joel ii. 4.) and to carry a resemblance of golden crowns on their heads; and their faces had the shape and air of men: All which may be considered as an emblematical prediction of the terrible ravage that the Saracens would make in battle, with great sagacity, speed, and strength, according to their customary way of fighting upon Arabian horses, which, like locusts, were swift of flight in pursuit of victory; whose riders would triumph, like crowned conquerors of several kingdoms, where they should come, and would wear turbants, like crowns, on their heads.

8. And, as a further description of this very people, they were represented in my vision, as wearing their hair in an effeminate manner, like women, after the Arabian fashion, either dishevelled to a great length upon their backs, or else plaited and tressed up; which may be considered, as an emblem of their insinuating and lecherous temper: And the appearance of their teeth was sharp and strong, like those of lions, to signify their rapacious fury, and the prevalence of their arms, as a strong people set in battle array, according to the prophetic meaning of such images. (Joel i. 6. and ii. 5.)

9. And, to shew that their defensive was equal to their offensive armament, they, in allusion to the hard horny skin of the natural locusts, appeared with breastplates, to secure their hearts from mortal wounds, as hard and impenetrable as if made of iron; a proper emblem of their being proof against the assaults of those in the empire with whom they waged war; and against their being overcome in battle, or invaded, by way of reprisal, in their own land. And the rushing speed and multitude of their armies on Arabian horses, which would give dreadful alarms to all that were near them, was represented by the loud noise that locusts make with clapping their wings when they fly in large companies, as if it were the sound of a multitude of chariots and horses, clattering and rushing into the battle, according to the description that is given of armies in prophetic language. (Joel ii. 4. 5.)

10. Fur-

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and there power was to hurt men five months.

10. Furthermore, they were represented in uncommon and surprising forms, as having long tails, like those of venomous scorpions; and they, like them, had desperate stings in their tails, signifying that they would not only make dreadful havock by the power of their arms, but would also infect the wicked inhabitants of the empire with their poisonous errors, by their false teachers, who, in prophetic stile, are called the tail, (Isa. ix. 15.) and so, from first to last, would be very pernicious: And this power of theirs was to be continued for a considerable time, to its proper period, like the power of locusts, that are lively and active for about five summer months, which is as long as they ordinarily live. (see the note on ver. 5)

11 And they had a king over them, *which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.*

11. And there was something in this representation of them, directly contrary to the usage of natural locusts, which have no king; (Prov. xxx. 27.) but these figurative locusts appeared as under the dominion and government of a powerful, tyrannical and malicious ruler, whose likeness they bear, and whose interests they serve; and he is no other than primarily the devil himself, that prince of darkness, and of the fallen angels in hell; or secondarily one of his wicked messengers, whose doctrine came from hell, whose name, as also the name of his principal, answerable to his temper, work, and design, is the destroyer, as is signified by the Hebrew word *abaddon*, and by the Greek word *apollyon*: Which may be considered, as intimating that Satan would be the principal chief; and, by his instigation and influence, Mahomet, under him, would be the grand leader of all the mischief and ruin, with respect to civil and religious concerns, which the Saracens, headed by Mahomet and his successors, would bring upon the empire, by the power of their arms, and the infection of their abominable errors, unto the destruction of the bodies and souls of men.

12 One who is past, *and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.*

12. Thus the first signally terrible wo which was denounced by the fifth angel to denote the judgements of God, that should befall the degenerate Christian empire, under the first invasions of the Saracens, is represented as what would be past and gone, about the year of our Lord 675; when they should bring that war to a conclusion. But, behold with astonishment, and assured expectation! there will be still two other yet more tremendous scenes of judgement opened when the sixth and seventh angels shall blow their respective trumpets in their order; the account of which follows.

TRUM-

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

TRUMPET VI. being the } 13. 14. Then the sixth  
second wo trumpet. } angel blew his trumpet,

and thereupon, methought I heard a certain loud voice, (*φωνὴ μέγας*) proceeding from the golden altar of incense, which was exhibited to my view, like that which stood before the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, (Exod. xxx. 1—6.) as being four-square, and having four horns, one at each corner of the altar; which may be considered as emblems of the intercession of Christ for his people, and of his power to protect them in the four corners of the earth; at which altar the angel of the covenant offered up the prayers of all saints in the immediate presence of God, as has been represented: (chap. viii. 3.) And this being the voice of Christ himself, he with sovereign authority commanded the sixth angel that had the second wo trumpet, saying to him, set at liberty the four destroying angels, who have been under restraint for some time past, as messengers of wrath that are bound, as it were in chains, at the great river Euphrates\*; which may be considered as a figurative

#### N O T E.

\* I should be strongly inclined with Mr Mede, and his many followers to consider the sixth trumpet, as referring to the devastations made by the Ottoman or Turkish empire, were it not that this makes too great a gap upon the close series of prophecy, which, as I take it, is carried on from the beginning to the end: For the Ottoman empire did not rise till Ottoman founded it, from whom it took its name, and who died about the year 1326, which is between six and seven hundred years after what I apprehend to be the period of the fifth trumpet; and therefore is not easily reconcilable to the regular and connected order of these predictions; unless upon the plan of synchronisms, which, tho' so commonly received, have always thrown the whole scheme into such confusion in my mind, as I could never get over, or tell how to adjust: And yet, I must confess, that the sixth trumpet has long appeared in my thoughts to be the most difficult, of any other part of the prophecy, to be reconciled with the orderly and well-connected series of correspondent events. But I am much obliged to the learned Mr. Lowman, whose history of

facts may probably account for it, which is all that I can pretend to in this and several other instances. I have therefore intirely followed the track that he has drawn out before us, relating to the sixth trumpet, as I have done, and shall in great measure do, in other particulars, where I think him to be in the right, referring the reader to consult his collection of authorities, which I now give notice of, once for all, whether his name be mentioned in the several places, or not. And the reason given in my paraphrase on this verse, why the destroying angels or messengers of wrath (which I take to mean the Saracens, as instruments of divine Providence, according to what is said of them, ver. 16. 17.) are spoken of as four, seems to me the most likely of any other that I have met with, and falls in with what this learned writer goes into, according to the observation of Mr. Daubuz, who takes the number four, to denote an universality of the matter comprised, as the four winds signify all the winds, Jer. xlix. 36. The four corners of the earth, all parts of the earth, Isa. xi. 12. and the four corners of the land, all parts of the land of Judea, Ezek. vii. 1.

And

figurative prediction of the order that would be given and fulfilled in the dispensations of providence, to take off the restraint which had been laid on the Saracens for above fifty years, (see the note on ver. 1.) that they might go forth from all quarters of their land, to execute yet further judgements upon the degenerate Christian empire in every part of it toward the four corners of the earth, as four other angels had been before ordered to hold back, or let out, the four winds, that were designed for judgements, according to the will of God. (chap. vii. 1.)

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

15. Hereupon the four angels, or messengers of divine wrath, were set at liberty, and stood ready to execute the judgements which God had further designed to bring upon the Romish pretendedly Christian, but really antichristian empire, according to the exact time of his appointment, whether it be to an hour, or a day, or a month, or a year, just as he should please to order it in his providence; and, in that precise time, to cut off a great number of the inhabitants of the empire under the rule of the third part of the known world; which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the still more terrible desolation that the Saracens would make in the empire, between the year 675 and 750, when they would enter Spain about the year 713 or 714, and obtain a complete victory over the Spaniards; soon after which they would over-run the whole country; and afterwards invade France, till they were defeated by Charles Martel, in a terrible and decisive battle, which put an entire stop to their arms about the year 734.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them.

16. And the multitude of their horsemen, which their armies would mostly consist of, was represented to be so prodigiously great, that, as innumerable companies are expressed by thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand; (chap. v. 11. and Dan. vii. 10.) so one would be apt to express this by two myriads of myriads in astonishment at it †: And I heard this hyperbolical proclamation of their number,

to

#### N O T E.

And these destroying angels were bound in the great river Euphrates, according to his account, by the divisions and quarrels of the Saracens after the death of Othman, about the succession to the Empire, which kept them near the river Euphrates, where most of their battles were fought and prevented their usual invasions and incursions into the Roman Empire about 50 Years.

† It is not to be supposed that any army upon earth could consist of two hundred thousand thousand, or two myriads of myriads, as the words signify. (*Two myriads of myriads*) But as the Saracens were famous for the vast and almost-increased multitude of forces, which consisted chiefly of cavalry or horsemen, this number is mentioned in the hyperbolical manner to denote a sort of innumerable multitude.

to signify that they would be, as it were, past all account.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

17. And in the like astonishing manner I beheld in my vision, that these innumerable and formidable Arabians, terrible as an army with banners, rode upon warlike horses, and that their riders were furnished with an armour of breast-plates, defensive and repelling, as fire; illustrious, firm and solid, as the jacinth stone; and invincible, as burning brimstone, which cannot easily be extinguished: \* And the heads of their horses had an aspect as bold, fierce and furious, as the heads of ravening lions; and there was a most tremendous appearance of streams of fire, and smoke, and brimstone, proceeding out of the mouths of the horses and their riders, with destructive force; all which may be considered as emblematical predictions of the wasting and murderous effects of this cruel victorious army of the Saracens, which would breath out nothing but misery, desolation and slaughter.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

18. By these three powers of their armies, for dreadful devastation, as signified by the fire, and smoke, and brimstone, which appeared as proceeding out of their mouths, vast numbers of the invaded people of the empire were miserably slain, and the rest suffered the greatest ravage and calamities of every other kind. (ver. 20.)

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

19. For, according to this representation of them, their power of spreading desolation, death and ruin, seemed to proceed out of their mouths, which spoke terror and mischief, wheresoever they came; yea, like the first train of Saracen invaders, (ver. 10.) they were equally mischievous with their tails: for their tails had an appearance like those of a monstrous sort of serpents, that are said to have two heads, one in the front, and the other at the tail of their bodies, for discharging their poison; which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the terrible wrath, destruction and pestilential errors, that would be poured out by the rear as well as main body of the Saracen armies in their second series of incursions into the Roman empire, which they would over-run with a deluge of destruction to the bodies and souls of men, from the beginning to the end

#### N O T E.

\* What is the meaning of breast plates of fire, jacinth and brimstone, I conceive can be only conjecture; and I have ventured to make mine, as being little satisfied with any other, and least of all

with that of cannon and brimstone powder, or gun-powder, which are modern inventions, some hundreds of years after the time that I think this prophecy refers to, (see the note on ver. 14.)

end of their victories, by the power of their princes, who, in prophetic stile, are called the head; and by their false teachers, who are called the tail. (Isa. ix. 14. 15.)

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their forceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their theft.

20. 21. And notwithstanding all these dreadful judgements, the remainder of those men, who escaped death by the fury of these invaders, were so stupid and obstinate as not to take conviction of, and be reclaimed from their evil courses, which had brought these severe calamities upon them, that they might renounce and depart from their idolatrous worship of demons, and of the images, which their own hands had made of earthly materials; such as gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which are senseless, dumb idols, that can neither see who they are that adore them: nor hear their prayers; nor take one step to answer them for their relief: nor did they repent of, and renounce their murderous practices; nor their enchantments; nor their whoredoms; nor their robberies, that they had defiled themselves with: which may be considered as a prediction of the idolatrous worship of angels and departed saints, and of images made of all those sorts of materials, that would begin to prevail among the popish part of the empire in those days, and would be encouraged and confirmed by Pope Gregory the second, in opposition to the Emperor Leo's orders to remove images out of the churches of Italy, about the year 726, and, instead of repenting of their image worship, it was at length established by the authority of counsels: and the other foretold abominations would still reign among them in their murdering the saints, in their pretended exorcisms, in their manifold uncleannesses, and in their various kinds of cheats, and impositions on the people; which, so far from being repented of, would grow more and more flagrant, till they should bring upon themselves the still more tremendous woes to be denounced by the seventh and last trumpeter, (chap. xi. 14. 15.) and to be fulfilled by the pouring out of the seven vials. (chap. xvi.)

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How tremendous are the denunciations, and how sure, after solemn neglected warnings, are the executions of God's wrath on his enemies, for their oppressions of his church, and their other multiplied abominations! He, whose kingdom rules over all, has the most terrible armies of men and devils at his command, to execute deserved judgements by them. And how easily can he restrain, or let them loose, according to his sovereign and holy will, beyond which none can go! The instruments of providence, as his messengers, shall in his appointed time bring distress and ruin upon carnal and idolatrous professors of

of Christ's name: They, like devouring locusts, raging lions, and venomous scorpions spread their terrors and pestilential principles, to destroy the lives and liberties, bodies and souls of men, under the influence of tyrannical powers and false prophets on earth, and of the devil, who heads them, and sends them forth like a great smoke of horrid darkness, that rises out of the bottomless pit. They carry the face of men for sagacity, and of women for insinuation; but are really as ravenous and destructive, as the most furious beasts of prey and malignant serpents. But how great soever the plagues be, that, in the way of God's righteous judgements, are inflicted by one sort of Antichristian enemies, like Mahometan Saracens, upon another, like the papists, for their idolatries, deceipts, debaucheries, thefts and murders; such is their stupidity and hardness of heart, that they will not repent of their crimes, nor be reformed: but still persist in them, and grow worse and worse, till, at length, all the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. But O what a comfort is it to God's own church and people, that Christ, who appears at the golden altar on their behalf, will take care of them, that they may have a hiding place in every day of evil, and that the miseries, which will come upon others, shall not touch them, who have this seal, as it were on their foreheads, The Lord knows them that are his! (2 Tim. ii 19.

## CHAP. X.

*An august introduction to the seventh trumpet, in which the angel of the covenant is represented as interrupting the train of prophecy, for a small interval, and as presenting a little open book, and uttering his voice as a lion, which is followed with seven thunders, intimating what he would further reveal under the seven vials, 1—3. A voice from heaven forbids writing, at present, what was uttered by the seven thunders, 4. The angel solemnly swears that, at the expiration of the following prophecies, time should be no more, and that in the days of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished: 5—7. A voice calls to John (who observes it) to eat the book, which would be sweet in his mouth, and bitter in his belly, 8—10. And tells him he must further prophesy of the yet future state of the church and of the world, in a successive order of time, 11 which was to be from about the year 756, (when the Pope of Rome was first invested with temporal dominion) for 1260 years then to com., according to the general description that was to be given of it in the three following chapters.*

### TEXT.

### PARAPHRASE.

**A**ND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his

**1. A**FTER the former representations which had been made to me of the state of the Roman empire and of the church, first before, and then after the legal establishment of Christianity, I was favoured with a succeeding vision, in which I beheld another angel, different from, and superior to those that had trumpets given



head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

given them to sound, even Christ himself, (see the note on chap. vii. 2.) who, though acting the part of a divine messenger in human nature, is partaker of proper deity, as *the mighty God*, (Isa. ix. 6.); methought, I saw this glorious person descend from heaven, and covering himself with an illustrious cloud, as an emblem of his coming to make a further revelation for the instruction and comfort of the church; he appeared like the great Jehovah, *who makes the cloud his chariot*, (Ps. civ. 3.) as our blessed Lord did in his descent upon mount Sinai, and ascension to heaven, (Exod. xxiv. 5. and Acts i. 9.): And there was the circular form of a beautiful rainbow over his head, like that which appeared round about the throne of God, (Ezek. i. 28. and Rev. iv. 5. see the note there) in token of his being ever mindful of his covenant in the darkest times, (see Gen. ix. 13,—17.): And his countenance shone with a dazzling lustre, like the sun in its meridian brightness, to the admiration and joy of his people; and his feet appeared with awful majesty and strength, like pillars of burning brass, for supporting the faithful, and of fire for consuming his enemies, much after the same august manner in which he had exhibited himself before. (Chap. i. 15, 16. See the paraphrase there.)

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

2 He also appeared as holding in his hand a little unfolded book, or roll, being the last part of the book which had been sealed, but the seals of which he had undertaken to loose, (chap. v. 1,—7.) and which might be called a *little book*, as it was now only the remainder of the whole, containing such events as should fall out in ages yet to come. And he having descended to this terraqueous globe, as consisting of land and water, methought I saw him stand with his *right foot* on the *sea*, and with his *left* on the *earth*, to signify his sovereign dominion over all persons and things in *both*; and that he would extend his government and grace to the continents of *Asia, Africa and Europe*, with their islands, including both the Eastern and Western empire, and even *the uttermost parts of the earth*, which his Father promised him the possession of, Ps. ii. 8.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

3 In this situation he, who has been spoken of as *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, (chap. v. 5.) made proclamation with a strong and tremendous voice, as loud as the roaring of a lion, commanding silence and attention to what would follow: And no sooner had he given forth this order, than I heard seven other voices, as loud awful, and terrible, as the greatest clap of thunder,

to denounce those judgments of God in general, which were to be particularly executed, in their order, on his antichristian enemies, by the pouring out of *seven vials* under the *seventh trumpet*.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

4 And when the seven thunder-like voices had finished their articulate denunciations, I was going to write them down, as apprehending that I was authorized so to do by the order before given me, (*chap. i. 19.*) and that they contained something of great consequence, for the comfort of the church under their antichristian-oppressions: But I was immediately stopped short, and prevented by another voice, which I heard, as directed to me from the throne of God in heaven, saying, Keep the things in your own breast, which have been uttered by the voices that were like seven thunders; ponder them in your heart, and conceal them, as yet, from public notice, as closely as if they were sealed up in a book, that none might read them: And there is no need for you to write them now, as the general hints, given by them, will be more particularly drawn out in some following visions; referring to those of the *seventh trumpet*, and the *seven vials* under it, which were afterwards to be revealed and recorded.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

5, 6 And to assure me of the certainty and importance of the things that were further to be revealed, relating to the affairs of the church, and of the world in ages yet to come, the glorious angel, whom, (as is said, *ver. 2.*) I saw standing with one foot upon the sea, and the other upon the earth, was represented to my view, as lifting up his hand to heaven, the throne of God's glory, according to the ancient manner and posture of taking solemn oaths, (*Gen. xiv. 22.* and *Dan. xii. 7.*) and as swearing by the eternal, almighty and immortal God, who, in distinction from all idols, is *from everlasting to everlasting*, the only living and true God, and the Creator of the upper and lower worlds; of heaven and all the hosts thereof, whether in the aerial, the starry, or the heaven of heavens; and of the terraqueous globe, consisting of the earth and sea; and all things contained therein: And the purport of this solemn oath, which Christ took, as the Angel of the covenant and God's messenger, was, that as formerly in answer to the question, How long it should be to the end of the then predicted wonders? He swore that it should be for *a time, times, and a half*\*, meaning twelve

#### N O T E.

\* "A time, times and a half time, and the same period, and intimate, not that all time shall be no longer," seems to refer to time should then come to an end; but that the

twelve hundred and sixty years, (*Dan. xii. 6, 7.*) so he now swears, that there should be no longer time, than *that*, before all antichristian enemies should be destroyed, and a glorious state of the church should take place, and put a final period to popish darkness, superstition and idolatry, as will more distinctly appear in after parts of this prophecy, though the time shall not be yet (*ἡ πόλις οὐκ ἔσται ἐτι.*)

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

7 But he swears that in the days which would be pointed out by the denunciations of the *seventh* angel, when he should begin to sound his trumpet \*, then all divine revelations and dispensations of providence, relating to the trials and the succeeding happy days of the church, and the destruction of antichrist and exaltation of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in all its glory, should be brought to a conclusion, which at present are secrets, and will all along in great measure be so, till correspondent facts, in a regular series, shall explain them; according to the prophecies and declarations that God has given of them to his ancient prophets, and particularly to his servants, *Daniel* (chap. vii. 25,—28. and xii. 6, 7.) and *Zechariah*, (chap. xiv. 9.)

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go,

8 And after this scene of vision, the voice which I had heard from heaven, (*ver. 4.*) called to me again, saying, Go up to the Angel of the covenant, who you observe stands with his right foot on the sea, and his

#### N O T E S.

the glorious state of the church should not be yet, until after the expiration of 1260 years, which are signified by other prophetic numbers that are made use of to give a general view of this period in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of this vision. Accordingly "a time, times, and a half time," as resolved into prophetic days, signify 1260 years, reckoning each day for a year, and each year to consist of twelve months of thirty days each month: For *three years*, which answer to *time, times*, (meaning two more times) and *a half time*, or half a year, make up 42 months, or 1260 years, which in our apostle's prophecy are parallel descriptions of the exact time of "the holy city's" "being trodden under foot by the Gentiles," and of the witnesses prophesying in sack-cloth," (chap. xi. 2, 3.) as also of the church's "flight into, and nourishment in" "the wilderness," (chap. xii. 6, 14.) and of antichrist's or "the beast's reign," (chap. xiii. 5.)—It is evident, that, were we to take these numbers of days, months, and years, in a literal sense, the space of time would be abundantly too short for all the events that are spoken of as to be fulfilled in that time,

which includes the whole period of the last state of the sufferings of the church to its succeeding glorious state, in which Satan shall be shut up for a thousand years: But the other way of computing is agreeable to the prophetic stile in former ages, which makes a *time* stand for a year, *Dan. iv. 23.*; and a *day* for a year, *Num. xiv. 34.* and *Ezek. iv. 5, 6.* And *seventy weeks* signify not seventy times seven weeks of *natural* days, but seventy times seven years, *Dan. ix. 24.*; which according to Sir Isaac Newton, were 490 years from the time that the dispersed Jews should be re-incorporated into a people and holy city, until the death and resurrection of Christ. (See his Observations on Daniel, p. 130. See also his note, p. 137. and 138, about the way of computing years, as consisting of 12 months, and every month of 30 days.)

\* The seventh trumpet, in course, was to sound next, as beginning at the expiration of the sixth; but is deferred to chap. xi. 25 &c. by the interpolation of a solemn preface, with which Christ, the Angel of the covenant, appeared, at the beginning of this chapter, to introduce it.

On, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

his *left* on the earth, (*ver.* 2.) and receive from him the little book, or roll, which is exhibited as unfolded in his hand, that you may have a clear insight into the great things contained therein, with a commission for making them known to others.

9 Accordingly, in obedience to the divine command, I drew near to the Head of all principalities and powers, and humbly besought him to deliver that little book to me, for my perusal. And he thereupon holding it out, said to me, as he formerly did to the prophet *Ezekiel*, (*chap.* iii. 1,—3.) Take it, according to your request; and then read and meditate upon it, and lay it up in your heart, till you understand and digest it, and be suitably affected with it, which, in figurative language, may be called, eating it up, (*see Jer.* xv. 16.); and in so doing, you will find some of its contents, relating to the sore afflictions and persecutions that the church is to suffer, will be as extremely grievous to your mind as the bitterest sensations can be to your bowels: But the knowledge of the mind and will of God herein, as his secrets revealed to you, and more especially with respect to the tender care which he will all along take of his people, and to the final issue of all their troubles, and the glory that is to follow them, will be as sweet to your thoughts as honey itself can be to your palate.

10 And I readily took the little open book or roll out of the angel's hand, and did eat it up in the manner he ordered me, and I found by experience, as he told me I would, that my insight into the great mysteries revealed therein, taking them all together, was as delightful to my soul as it is possible for honey to be to the taste. I, like the prophet, (*Jer.* xv. 16.) *found God's words, and did eat them; and his word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart*: And afterward, when I came to reflect on the tribulations that must beset the church of Christ, before it attains its highest prosperity and glory on earth, my soul was as deeply affected with pain and anguish in the doleful prospect as the bitterest tortures can be to the bowels.

11 Then this glorious angel said to me, Sweet as these things are in one view, and bitter in another, you must not keep them to yourself, as you was ordered to do by the general intimations that were given you by the seven thunder-like voices, (*ver.* 4.); but you must go on to publish these, for the support and comfort of my people, in the further revelations that shall be made of them to you, as to come to pass in their successive order,

order \*, upon many people, and nations, and countries of different languages, and upon rulers and potentates, as well as lower ranks of people, with regard to what shall befall them till the whole scheme of God's purposes, prophecies, and providences shall be accomplished concerning them, and shall end in the total overthrow of all antichristian-enemies, and in the compleat salvation of the church.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How endearing, august, and awful, are the representations Christ has made of himself, as the Angel of the covenant, with a rainbow on his head, and a countenance as bright and dazzling as the sun; and with feet, like pillars of fiery metal, standing on the earth and sea, and a voice as loud and tremendous as the roaring of a lion! He is ever mindful of his covenant with his people in the worst of times; and amidst all the troubles that are denounced to his enemies, as with the voice of thunder, has all things under his dominion; and appears with illustrious majesty for the relief and comfort of those that belong to him, and for the terror and destruction of his and their enemies. These are things worthy of the closest meditation, that we may understand, and be suitably affected with them, as far as they are revealed, with a commission from Christ to publish them, while secret things are still to be left with him, till time shall declare them. Though it cannot but be bitter to the souls of true believers to think of the severe persecutions which the church is to expect under the reign of antichrist; yet what a softening to that grief; what an encouragement to faith and patience; and what a pleasure must it be, to have realizing prospects of the care that Christ will take of them during their tribulations, and of the happy period he will put, in his appointed time, to all their sorrows, when they shall be turned into joy and praise, and his kingdom shall be built up in its purity and glory, with wide extent, upon the ruins of all antichristian-powers! Then, as the Angel of the covenant swore by the Creator of all worlds, who lives for ever and ever, the mystery of God, relating to his dispensations of providence and grace, shall be finished; and all the prophecies, which are now the objects of the faith and hope of his people, shall be clearly explained, and actually fulfilled, to his glory and their everlasting triumph.

### C H A P. XI.

*The first general description of the state of the church for 1260 years, to be dated from the rise of the temporal power of the Pope about the year 756, is represented under the figure of a temple measured, but the outward court of which, as descriptive of formal professors, is left to the Gentiles, or idolatrous church of Rome, for 42 months, 1, 2. During this time of equal date with 1260 prophetic days, or years, two witnesses, or a few, from age to age, prophecy in sackcloth, but with great power, 3,—6. They are slain by popish tyranny, which is figured out under the image of the beast, and are in a manner suppressed for three prophetic days and a half, equal to the 42 months; after*

### N O T E.

\* It is well known to grammarians, that the preposition (*ἐν*) with a dative case, as it is here, and rendered *before*, often signifies *concerning*; and, in that regimen, it is

translated *over and upon*, as in Luke xv. 7. *over one sinner*, (*ἐν τῷ ၿμάρτανι*); and Eph. ii. 20. *upon the foundation*, (*ἐν τῇ θεμελίῳ*).

after which they arise and ascend to heaven, as bearing their testimony with greater efficacy and honour than ever before, unto the overthrow of a tenth part of the Romish jurisdiction, and the slaughter of 7000 men, and to the consignment of the rest of that party, which puts an end to the second wo, 7,—14: And under the seventh trumpet, denouncing the third wo, all antichristian powers would be utterly destroyed, and issue in a glorious state of Christ's kingdom upon earth, 15,—19.

### PERIOD III.

#### TEXT.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

#### PARAPHRASE.

**T**HEN, in order to my having a general view of the true state both of the pure and the antichristian-church, methought, a reed was put into my hand, answering to the measuring rod and line which the prophets, *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, saw in vision for measuring the temple at *Jerusalem*, (*Ezek.* xl. 3,—5. and *Zech.* ii. 1, 2.) And the Angel of the covenant, who had given me the open little book, (*chap.* xix. 8. &c.) standing near, said unto me, Arise, and with this rod, which is a proper emblem of the holy scripture, as the rule by which all persons, doctrines, and practices are to be tried, (*Isa.* viii. 20. and *Gal.* vi. 16.) take the just dimensions of the true gospel-church, which is now the temple of God, as his habitation through the Spirit: (*1 Cor.* iii. 16, 17. and *2 Cor.* vi. 16. and *Eph.* ii. 21, 22.) Measure likewise the altar, at which they, as a spiritual house and holy priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*, (*1 Pet.* ii. 5.): And he further ordered me to take an exact account of those of the visible church, who worship God in spirit and truth, through Christ as their altar, according to gospel institution.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

2 But though the whole temple at *Jerusalem* was measured, because all its parts were to be entirely rebuilt; yet, said the angel unto me (alluding to the outward court of that temple, (*Ezek.* xl. 17.) where all *Israel* worshipped promiscuously,) You shall not take in the whole of the visible church in your measurement; but shall leave out such as do not agree to this rule; Thereby intimating, that formal professors, who answer to outward court-worshippers, should not be reckoned to the true church of Christ, as being rejected of him: For, said he, that part of the visible church is permitted, by the righteous judgment of God, to fall under the power of antichristian *Rome*, which might fitly be styled the *Gentiles*, as their idolatrous worship of saints, angels, and images, would resemble the

the demon-worship of the heathen, and as many others of their religious services would be derived from, and symbolize with them: And these *Gentilizing* Christians, as he further added, shall not only trample upon, oppress and persecute the pure church, but also exercise a tyrannical dominion over all professors of the Christian name, even as it was foretold that *Jerusalem* itself, the once holy city, should be broken down of the Gentiles, *Luke xxi. 24.* (See the note there.) And the continuance of their power shall be for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years,\* which, in the stile of prophecy, are denoted by forty and two months, reckoning each month at thirty days, and each day for a year, (see the note on *chap. x. 6.*)

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

3 But notwithstanding all the degeneracy and oppression of the Romish church, I will raise up, give commission and authority to, and powerfully preserve and assist a competent, though small number of faithful servants, to bear an honourable witness to my name and gospel, and the purity of my institutions, in their preaching, holy profession, and conversation, and to remonstrate against the idolatry and other gross corruptions of that apostate church, in a succession of them from age to age †; which may be called *two witnesses*, with reference to the validity of their testimony to establish the truth of what they declare; (See *Deut. xvii. 6.* and *xix. 15.* *Matth. xviii. 16.* and *2 Cor. xiii. 1.*) : And with an allusion to some famous pairs of prophets in

#### N O T E S.

\* This 1260 years, as Mr Lowman has observed, and I think shewn with strong probability in his Preface, and in the Contents of this third period, "is not to begin till the imperial government of Rome was passed away, as the preceding forms of government were before it, till another form of government should be established in Rome, which, on some accounts, should be called the seventh, and on other accounts the eighth form of government; when Rome, once the powerful mistress of the world, after she had lost her dominion, and seemed to lose it without hope of recovery, should be restored to power and empire again, which was to continue during the 1260 days of this period, and then to be utterly overthrown, and never to rise again."

— "Now, (says he) as a great variety of concurring circumstances shew the beginning of this period about the year 756, when the Popes were invested with the temporal dominion of Rome, in which only time, the several descriptions do all exactly agree; the 1260 days of this prophecy are to last so long as this power is to continue; which

seems evidently to shew, that we are not to understand 1260 natural days, the time of this period, but so many prophetic days, in which a day is given for a year."

† These *two witnesses* mean, not any two particular persons, but a succession of faithful ministers: For their prophesying or preaching in sackcloth was to last 1260 years; and their being spoken of, as *two*, may well be considered with respect to the sufficiency of their witness-bearing, and in allusion to Moses and Aaron, the deliverers of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and revivers of the worship of God among them; to Elijah and Elisha, the restorers of his worship from Baal's idolatry; and to Zerubbabel and Joshua, the rebuilders of the temple; most of all which persons seem to be referred to ver. 4, 5, 6. And, perhaps, it may point to some remarkable pairs of witnesses against popish corruptions, that should arise in a succession of them, during this period; such as the Albigenes and Waldenses; John Hus and Jerome of Prague; Luther and Calvin, and the like.

in former days : And these shall continue to bear a noble testimony to me and my cause through the whole term of Antichrist's reign, which will be twelve hundred and sixty days, reckoning each day for a year, and so will be exactly the same period, but now signified (*ver. 2.*) by *forty and two months*. (See the note on *chap. x. 6.*) In all which time, as the ancient prophets and people of God used to wear sackcloth, in token of mourning and lamentation, in the days of *Israel's* affliction ; so, in allusion therunto, these faithful servants shall bravely maintain their testimony in circumstances as distressed and perilous, and with hearts as deeply affected at the low and degenerate state of religion, and at the afflicted condition of the people of God under the power of persecutions, as though they were to manifest it by clothing themselves with sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

4 These, how much soever they may be despised and oppressed by the apostate church, are in high honour and esteem with God ; and as *Zerubbabel* and *Josua* the high priest were compared to *two olive trees*, that fed the lamps of the temple with oil, on account of their employing all their wisdom, gifts and graces, with which they were richly furnished, for rebuilding the temple, and re-establishing the worship of God in it, under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, (*Zech. iv. 6,—14.*) ; so these witnesses in sackcloth shall be continually supplied with the light and assistances of the Spirit to enable them, amidst all their trials, to minister the pure uncorrupted gospel, for the edification and comfort of the church, and for holding forth the light of truth and holiness to the world, like candles set on candlesticks, (*Matth. v. 14,—16.*) as becomes servants standing in the presence of the sovereign Lord of the whole earth, to minister before him, with a consciousness of his observing them, and with an humble dependence on him for protection, assistance, and success.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

5 And if any, through inveterate prejudices against them and their doctrine, shall set themselves to injure and distress them, and put an end to their testimony, as *Ahaziah* did in the case of *Elijah*, when to seize him, he sent two companies of soldiers, which were consumed by fire from heaven, in answer to his prayer, and in vindication of his righteous cause, (*2 Kings i. 10,—12.*) ; the word of the Lord, in the mouth of these two faithful witnesses, shall be like fire to devour their enemies, (*Jer. v. 12, 14.*) as God will hear their prayers



prayers under oppression, and will certainly avenge them in due season, by executing the just judgments they shall denounce in their ministry, by his authority against their antichristian-persecutors: And if, notwithstanding all the solemn warnings that shall be given, they will still persist in abusing them and obstructing their good work, they shall sooner or later, in the manner but now mentioned, find the dreadful effects of it to their own destruction, which is repeated, like the doubling of *Pharaoh's* dream, because the thing is certain. (*Gen. xli. 32.*)

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

6 As the prophet *Elijah* had power with God by prayer, in a time of drought and famine, to stop the bottles of heaven, according to his prediction, that rain might not descend for the space of three years and six months to make the earth fruitful, (*1 Kings xvii. 1.* and *Jam. v. 17.*); and as *Moses* and *Aaron* received authority from God to turn the waters of *Egypt* into blood, (*Exod. vii. 17.*) and to inflict any other plague on that oppressive and persecuting people, which a divine order directed them to: So these witness-bearing servants were represented to me, as being so dear to God, and having such an interest in him by the prayer of faith, as, during the course of their prophesying, to denounce against, and bring down upon their cruel antichristian-enemies, such terrible punishments of a temporal and spiritual nature, whether by war or famine, or with-holding the rain of his word, spirit, and providential bounties, as often as he sees fit to order them to denounce either of those judgments against the subjects or the Romish dominion: And this he authorized them to do, with effect upon them for their obstinate wickedness, not from a spirit of private revenge, but for the vindication of his own honour, and of the faithfulness and importance of their testimony.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

7 And during the time of their witness-bearing, till they shall have finished their testimony in sackcloth, to Christ and his gospel, and against all antichristian-errors in doctrine and worship, through the forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years, the papal tyranny, or grand antichrist, which was represented to me under the figure of a wild beast, (*70 Eplos.* see also *chap. xiii. 1.* and *xvii. 8.*); the same that was foretold by the fourth beast in *Daniel's* prophecy, (*chap. vii. 23,—25.*); and derives his power from Satan, like one that rises up from the horrid unfathomable abyss of hell: This cruel beast, whose coming will be after the working

*working of Satan*, (2 Thess. ii. 9.) will make a furious opposition to my witnesses, and will be suffered to prevail, by stratagem, and violence, for a time, against them, and deprive them of their civil and religious liberties, and make great slaughter of them \*.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

8 And as it is the highest instance of merciless barbarity, to deny dead bodies a burial, and leave them shamefully exposed in public places of concourse; so, to shew the most malignant inhumanity and indignity against these witnesses, they will not only be slain, in a political, and many of them in a literal sense; but will be exposed to open contempt and ignominy in the popish dominion, which is of large extent, and has for its capital the great city of *Rome*, (chap. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. and xviii. 10,—16. 18, 21.) which in a mystical sense may be called *Sodom*, for its pride, filthiness, and

#### N O T E.

\* Many learned expositors understand this "slaying of the witnesses," to relate to some more than commonly severe persecutions of the church, for three prophetic days or years and a half, (ver. 9.) toward the close of the 1260 years of Antichrist's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. But they are much divided in their conjectures about the time of this event, whether it be already past, or yet to come. They, who suppose it to be already past, refer it to very different instances of severe persecutions, which continued only three years and a half. Some carry it so far back, as to the council of Constance, about the year 1414, when John Huss and Jerome of Prague were put to death; others refer it to the Smalcaldic war in Germany, about 1547; others, to the Popish persecution in Queen Mary's days in England, about the year 1553; others, to the massacre of the Protestants in France, 1572; and others, to the cruelties exercised on the Vaudois in Piedmont, under the Duke of Savoy, about 1685: All which remarkable persecutions lasted about three years and a half. And several of these expositors suppose, though not very consistently with their own schemes, that "the rising of the witnesses" was at the time of the Protestant Reformation; whereas most of the facts, to which they apply the "slaying of the witnesses," were after the Reformation commenced: Others of them, who also take the three days and a half (ver. 9.) to signify in prophetic stile three years and a half, think, that the "slaying of the witnesses," and consequently their rising and ascending is still to come toward the close of the 1260 years, or 42 months of their prophesying in sackcloth. For they apprehend that the witnesses are not yet risen, and ad-

vanced to so great power and honour as is signified by their "standing on their feet" and ascending up to heaven; and that no such blow has hitherto been given to Popery, as is represented to be the immediate consequence of their rising and ascending. All this shews the extreme uncertainty that attends every guess about the slaying, rising, and ascending of the witnesses, upon the foot of understanding the "three days and a half" to mean only "three years and a half." But all these controversies about it are effectually superseded, if (as seems to me most likely) we resolve the three days and a half into prophetic days of years, and then the three years and a half into an agreement with "the time, and times, and half a time," in this book, (chap. xii. 14.) and in Daniel's prophecy, (chap. xii. 6, 7.) and so make them equal to the prophetic 42 months and 1260 days, (see the note on chap. x. 6.) This makes the general descriptions of this period entirely uniform; and the words "when they shall have finished their testimony (*οταν τελωσιν*) may, according to the latitude of the tense and particle, signify, "while they are, or shall be performing their testimony:" For (*οταν*) when sometimes signifies *while*, as in Matth. xxiv. 31.; and *τελειωσιν* is rendered *performed*, Luke ii. 39.—But if, as some suppose, the words may be rendered, "When they shall be about to finish their testimony," or toward the close of this period for the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which I apprehend is not yet expired, then this slaying them must still be to come. And it seems not improbable but that the last efforts of Antichristian powers may be the most terrible and prevalent of all that have gone before it since the Reformation.

and wickedness, and *Egypt* for its tyranny, oppression, and idolatry; and may be compared to *Jerusalem*, which killed the prophets, and, when under the *Roman*-jurisdiction, put our blessed Lord to the shameful and painful death of the cross, and afterward crucified him afresh in the martyrdom of his members, which will be acted over again by these cruel persecutors.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

9 And this will be counted such a triumph of the antichristian power over the saints †, that the subjects of its dominion, wheresoever they dwell, in different countries of various tribes, languages, and nations, will barbarously insult over them, as seeing them exposed, with as much ignominy, abhorrence, and inhumanity, as though they were loathsome carcases kept above ground, and not suffered to be decently interred, during the period of their prophesying in sackcloth, which may be called three days and a half, in allusion to the time that unburied dead bodies may ordinarily be kept, without offensive putrefaction, and which in prophetic stile is answerable to *a time, times, and half a time*, another prophetic number, parallel to *forty and two months*, or *twelve hundred and sixty days*. (See the note on *ver. 7*.)

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth.

10 And the inhabitants of the papal territories will be mightily pleased at the inhuman treatment of the slain witnesses; and, as though the day were now absolutely their own, will congratulate one another, and go into all sorts of merriment and feasting, and *sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor*, as if, like the day of the *Jews* deliverance from their enemies, (*Psalm* ix. 22.) this were to be observed as a time of thanksgiving to God; because they had brought down the faithful monitors, that filled the subjects of the antichristian-empire with intolerable vexation, by testifying both openly and practically, by preaching and example, against their abominable corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners; and by denouncing the judgments of God, which would come upon them, on that account.

11 And after three

11 But in vain will they imagine themselves secure from

#### N O T E.

† Same by "the people, that should see their dead bodies, and not suffer them to be put in graves," understand their kind Protestant friends, who would not suffer them to be buried, in hopes of their reviving again. But it seems more suitable to the following verse, and the whole tenor of this general description of the mournful state of

the witnesses, while prophesying in sackcloth, to understand it as meaning their barbarous pagan enemies: And yet it must be owned, that the other sense suggests great encouragement to the church under all their suffering circumstances, on supposition that it is to be confined to times after the Resurrection.

three days and an half, the spirit of life from God entered into them: and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

from being ever troubled again with a revival of the cause, which they thought was so thoroughly suppressed, as to be past all likelihood of recovery: For, after the expiration of the above-mentioned period, which, tho' consisting of twelve-hundred and sixty years, may, in a way of computing prophetic numbers, be expressed, as it has been put now, (*ver. 9.*) by three days and an half, (see the note on *ver. 7.*) Methought I saw the quickning spirit, which, proceeding from God, entered into, raised up and animated a succession of faithful witnesses to this same glorious cause, of the same principles and temper with those that had gone before them, as *John the Baptist* came in the spirit and power of *Elias*, and for that reason bore his name: (*Luke i. 17. and Matth. xi. 14. and xvii. 11, 12.*) And they stood with strength, courage, and vigour, on their feet, like persons raised in full health from the dead, and ready to engage in any service that God should call them to, as *Israel's* restoration was represented in *Ezekiel's* vision under the figure of a resurrection of dry bones, and of their standing upon their feet. (*Chap. xxxvii. 1,—10.*) And at their enemies seeing this unexpected wonderful alteration, they were terribly afraid of being tormented by these witnesses, more than ever before.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

12 And for the further encouragement of these risen witnesses, methought, I heard a loud voice to call them from heaven, the throne of God's glory, saying, Come up hither; by which was signified, that God would visibly take them into his special protection, and would assist, own, and honour them with great success in his work and cause: And thereupon, methought, in allusion to Christ's visible ascension to heaven in a cloud after his resurrection from the dead, they ascended up to heaven in the midst of a bright cloud, to signify God's exalting them to eminent dignity, power, and prosperity, according to the metaphorical sense, in which the scripture uses such terms, (*Isa. xiv. 13. and Matth. xi. 23*) and their enemies could not but see what a glorious change was made in their circumstances, and what a signal testimony of favour and honour God had therein given to them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were

13 And, at the very same time, there were strong convulsions and confusions in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the antichristian nations, which are represented under the emblem of a great earthquake, like that which attended the resurrection of our Lord, (*Matth. xxviii. 2.*); and by means thereof a very considerable

were slain of men seven thousand : and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

derable body ; which may be called a tenth part of the papal jurisdiction : fell off from it \*. And, in the midst of these commotions, a great number of their party, like seven thousand men of name, power, and influence, (*οὐκ ὡς ἀνδρες*) together with their dependents, fell in battle : and the remainder of them were astonished and terrified, and forced to own, to the glory of the only true God, whose throne is established in heaven, that there was an extraordinary appearance of his power and providence in favour of his church, and against his popish enemies ; and by means of preaching the gospel, in concurrence with his Spirit and his amazing providence, they were converted from superstition and idolatry, to the glory of God, in an acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

14 The second wo is past : and behold, the third wo cometh quickly.

14 This brings us to the end of the *second* great wo, that had been threatened by the *sixth* angel, (chap. ix. 13, &c.) And observe, with attention and reverend awe, the *third* and *last* wo will be immediately denounced by the *seventh* angel.

15 And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

15 TRUMPET VII. being the *third* and *last* wo-trumpet.] 15. Then the *seventh* angel blew his trumpet, which was to be followed with effusions of the *seven* vials, (chap. xvi.) that would bring about the entire ruin of the antichristian-state of Rome ; and immediately upon this notice of it, there were loud acclamations of joy and praise among the witnesses that ascended up to heaven, (*ver.* 12.) saying, Now the long-looked for, and earnestly desired time is come, in which all the kingdoms of this world, and particularly those that had been under antichrist's dominion before, are brought into a spiritual, cheerful, and holy subjection, as nations devoted to God and to his Messiah ; they being made a willing people in the day of his power : And he, who has set up his throne in great glory among them, shall rule

#### N O T E.

\* The account given in the paraphrase of the "tenth part of the city, and seven thousand men," as meaning a considerable part of the Romish jurisdiction and principal men in it, appears to me as probable, as any of the numerous conjectures that had been made about it. Some fix upon one, and others upon another of the ten kingdoms, into which the western empire was divided, after it became antichristian. But, as far I see, we must wait for the event to determine it, since this part of the general view of the prophecy seems to be not yet fulfilled : And the same may be said with respect to the sentiments of others, who think that by the "tenth part of the city,"

is meant Rome itself, which is now but a tenth part of what it was at the time of this prophecy. But be these guesses as they will, I take the tenth part of the city's falling, and seven thousand being slain, to signify some very great downfall of popish powers, that is immediately to succeed the 1260 years of the beast's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and to be completed by the pouring out of the seven vials under the seventh trumpet, (chap. xvi.) For the numbers *seven* and *ten* are often used to signify *many*, as in Job v. 19. Ps. lxxix. 12. Luke xvii. 4. Gen. xxi. 7. 1 Sam. i 3. and Eccles. vii. 19.

rule over them by his word, spirit, providence, and scepter of righteousness, as their King; and he shall reign in this manner upon earth, till the utmost period of this glorious dispensation, and afterwards under a different form, in heaven, together with his Father and Spirit, to all eternity.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

16, 17 And, upon hearing these glad tidings of great joy, the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, which were seated with honour, dignity, and delight on their thrones in the immediate presence of God, (*chap. iv. 4.*) rose from their seats; and prostrating themselves with deep humility and reverence, paid their solemn adorations to God the Son, together with the Father †, saying, We bless thy holy and glorious name, and pay our cheerful and grateful acknowledgments to thee, O thou eternal and almighty Jehovah, the sovereign Lord of all, and, together with thy Father, the only true God, (*see the notes on chap. i. 4. 8.*) who from everlasting to everlasting art unchangeably the same in thy being and perfections, counsels, appointments, and covenant, as God; and art *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, as Mediator; (*Heb. xiii. 8*) We solemnly adore and praise thee; because thou has now eminently assumed and asserted thy natural and office-right and authority, to exercise universal dominion for the good of thy church; and hast reigned, by thy providential dispensations, with great power and righteousness over all thine enemies; and, by thy grace, over all thy people in the most conspicuous, effectual, and extensive manner.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and

18 And we bless thy divine Majesty, that though the nations, which were subject to antichristian powers, were enraged against, and cruelly persecuted thy witnesses, and were filled with indignation at thy appearing for their rescue; yet their glorious cause is now judged: thy righteous vengeance is executed upon those that oppressed them, and repented not of their evil deeds; and thy appointed time, the set-time for favouring Sion, is now come, that thou shouldst avenge the quarrel of thy covenant in reviving, owning and honouring those, who in a civil sense were dead, and in vindicating the character

#### N O T E.

† I think that all the following descriptions of the divine Person here spoken of, may, in an especial manner, point out to us the Lord Christ, as most immediately intended in this ascription of glory, though not to the exclusion of the eternal Father, to whom, together with the Son, the king-

doms of this world will be brought into subjection, when Christ shall "take to himself his great power and reign;" which seems most evidently to be spoken of, by way of eminence, as the time of his glorious kingdom upon the earth.

and great, and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

characters of thy holy martyrs who were faithful unto death; and that thou shouldst bestow gracious rewards of full liberty, peace and prosperity, in the enjoyment of all gospel-ordinances and privileges, upon thy ministering servants, who in their own persons, or in their predecessors, or both, made known thy will, and preached thy pure gospel, in mournful circumstances at the peril of their lives: and not upon them only, but upon all thy people, whom thou hast set apart and sanctified for thyself, and who worship thee with a reverential fear of thy holy name, whether they be weaker or stronger believers, or persons of lower or higher rank and station in the church, or in the world; and that thou shouldst render tribulation to those antichristian enemies, who troubled them; and bring utter destruction upon those, who in their day, by false doctrine, fraud, and violence, corrupted, plundered and destroyed the inhabitants of the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

19 And as the temple at *Jerusalem*, which was the seat of public worship, and a type of the New Testament-church, appeared in all its glory, when the veil was turned aside to give an open view of the holy of holies, and of the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat and cherubim upon it, which were emblems of the divine presence; so I had a vision of the temple, and all things in it, as exposed to my sight, without the interposition of a veil, to intimate the exceeding light, liberty, and glory, with which God's spiritual temple, his church on earth, should appear in this happy state of it: And this glorious revolution was represented to me, as attended with such heavy and destructive judgments upon the enemies of Christ and his church, as may fitly be compared to the most terrible tempests of lightning, and roarings in the air, and claps of thunder; and to the shocks, overthrows and ruins of universal earthquake, and storms of prodigious hail-stones, as if the dissolution of all things were at hand.

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How certainly may we conclude, that the wickedness of the wicked shall have an end, and that God will establish the just! When he appropriates a peculiar people to himself, according to the rule of his word, he will separate the precious from the vile, and make no account of carnal professors, whom he will leave to the power of antichristian enemies: But he will always have a seed to serve him, and bear witness to him and his gospel, though in mournful circumstances, like persons clothed in sackcloth, through the whole period of popish tyranny, superstition and idolatry, which was to last twelve hundred and sixty years. His faithful witnesses, shall, nevertheless, stand all that while with acceptance before him, and be the means of conveying light and influence in the true church of Christ. But woe to them, those who, like antichristian *Roms*, (which may well be compared

ed to *Sodom* and *Egypt* for wickedness, persecution, and idolatry) set themselves against these witnesses, to oppress, silence, and slay them. God will take the part, and bring down heavy vengeance upon the heads of all their enemies: and though he may suffer them, for an appointed season, to be *politically*, and some of their number *corporally* slain, and their cause to be in great measure suppressed, by the beast which rose out of the bottomless pit; and to be treated with indignity under the jurisdiction of *Rome*, and insulted with mirth and triumph by multitudes of that party, which could not tell how to bear the stinging admonition and reproof of their holy doctrines, examples, prayers, and threatenings of divine judgments; they shall have a rising, ascending, and flourishing state of security and honour, by the power of God's Spirit, and the workings of his providence, to their own exceeding joy, and to the envy and vexation of their enemies. And ah! How will many of their persecutors be then affrighted at the thought of what they have done against the faithful servants of the Lord, and at the desolation then coming upon themselves! Happy will it be for those, whose fright shall end in a thorough conversation, and in giving glory to God. And O what a blessed time will that be, when the power of popery shall be totally reduced, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ! Then the glorious privileges of the gospel-church shall open in light and liberty, purity and peace, in delightful communion with God, and in holiness of heart and life; and their Lord and Saviour, who is the eternal and almighty God, together with the Father, will vindicate their righteous cause, and bountifully reward his suffering servants with the smiles of providence and grace; and will pour destruction upon all antichristian-powers at the end of their twelve hundred and sixty years reign, who had been the plague of the earth: And this he will do by methods as terrible as the most shocking tempests of thunder, lightning, hail, and earthquakes, can possibly figure out to us. The hope of this complete deliverance of the church is their support and comfort in all preceding tribulations; and when Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, to the entire destruction of his enemies, and happiness of them that love and fear him, then all his people on earth will join the heavenly chorus in animated thanksgivings and praises to him, who shall reign for and ever.

## C H A P. XII.

*A second general description of the same period of the church of Christ, and of the Popish empire, under the figures of a woman driven into the wilderness, but preserved in safety there, and of a great red dragon, meaning the devil, as exerting his power principally by the Pope and his party, who would persecute her 1260 prophetic days or years, 1,—6. Michael and his angels fight against the devil and his angels, who were defeated: upon which there are loud acclamations of joy and praise, attended with a denunciation of woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the devil's or dragon's rage, 7,—12. Hereupon the dragon persecutes the church, which is hid from him, and is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, answering to 1260 prophetic days, 13, 14. He endeavours to destroy her, as by a flood which is swallowed up by some civil powers, stilled the earth; and, being thus disappointed, he renews his war against the remnant of her seed, 15,—17.*

## TEXT.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven;

## PARAPHRASE.

AND in another general view which was given me of the state of the church, and of its antichristian-enemies for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years



ven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

years, there was represented to me a very remarkable significant figure (*espouse*) in heaven \*, portending great events: which was of a woman most gloriously adorned, a fit emblem of Christ's church or spouse, as highly honoured of God: She appeared as surrounded with rays of illustrious brightness, like the sun; which may signify her having put on Christ and his righteousness, and being irradiated with the light of truth, comfort and holiness, as derived from *the Sun of righteousness, which arose upon her, with healing in his wings*: (Malac. iv. 2.) And the moon was represented as placed under her feet: Which may be considered as an emblem of her elevation above the obscure light of Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and of her trampling, with holy indifference and contempt, upon all the enjoyments of this world, both of which are as changeable and deficient as the moon, that has no light but what it borrows from the sun. And there was the appearance of a crown upon her head, bespangled with twelve bright stars, instead of so many brilliant diamonds, to intimate, that all her light of knowledge and grace was communicated, as a crown of glory to her, by means of, and according to the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

\* And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

2 And, methought, this wonderfully remarkable woman, appearing to be big with child, cried out, as in the throws and pangs of a woman in labour, just ready, and earnestly longing to be delivered \*; which in figurative language, (*I/a. liv. 1. lxvi. 7, 8, 9.*) signifies the strong groanings, eager desires, wrestling prayers, and indefatigable labours of the church, under sharp persecutions, for a numerous offspring of converts, that *Christ, in his doctrine and image, might be formed in them*, (Gal. iv. 19.) and they might *be born of God*. (1 John v. 1, 4.)

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads,

3 And while the woman was in travail, I saw, in my vision, another significant sign of a contrary nature in heaven: (see the note on *ver. 1.*) And, behold I with wonder and amazement, it was the figure of the great red dragon, which represented the devil, (*ver. 9.*) as a powerful, cruel, and savage adversary, all over stained

#### N O T E S.

\* By *heaven* some understand the place where the apostle had his vision; others, the air; others, the church, which is the kingdom of heaven on earth. But, being uncertain in which of these senses it is to be taken, the paraphrase leaves it undetermined.

† "Being with child and travailing in birth," are beautiful figures, by which the church is represented in Scripture, as bring-

ing forth a spiritual offspring: Accordingly Jerusalem is called "the mother of us all," and, with a prophetic view to the glory of the gospel-church, "Of Zion it shall be said, 'This and that man was born in her,'" &c. (Ps. lxxxvii. 5, 5.) and, "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," (Is. lvi. 8.)

heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

stained with the blood of martyrs, especially by Popish instruments, to whom *he gave his power*; (chap. xiii. 2.) Accordingly the dragon, as acting in and by them, was represented to me under the form of a strange monster, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; by which may be signified the Pope, as invested with temporal, as well as spiritual empire, whose seat would be at *Rome*, which stands upon seven mountains; and whose dominion would be the seventh form of supreme government, (chap. xvii. 9—12.) \*; and who would have a powerful rule, of which horns are an emblem, over the ten kingdoms into which the *Roman* empire would before that time be divided; and would exercise royal authority with great extent; the emblem of which are seven crowns set on these seven heads, to denote that all the power of the former government of *Rome* would center in him.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

4 And by means of his agents and followers, persecutions and corrupt doctrines, which for their power and malignity may be compared to a great dragon's tail, this monster swept away a considerable number of ecclesiastical sons from their spiritual stations in the church, drawing them into superstition and idolatry, and throwing them down from a pursuit of heavenly views to an attachment to earthly things; such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. And while the church was labouring with great difficulty and earnest desire, like a woman in travail, to propagate pure and undefiled religion, and make sincere converts

to

#### N O T E.

\* The description of this great red dragon is so near a-kin to that which is given of the beast, chap. xiii. 1. and xvii. 9,—11. that one would think we could not easily miss of seeing the same power to be intended by both. (See the note on chap. xi. 2.) There is only one difference in these figurative representations of the dragon and the beast, chap. xiii. 1. The dragon here appeared with "seven crowns on his seven heads," and the beast there with "ten on his ten horns." Perhaps, the reason of that variation may be, because while the heathen Roman empire subsisted, and, as such, persecuted the church, Rome alone had the imperial dignity, and the ten kingdoms were only provinces under her. But, when the empire became Antichristian, these provinces were formed into distinct kingdoms; and so are represented as crowned, though still in a dependence on the Pope, chap. xvii. 9,—13. However, as the crowns and horns in both are emblems of royal dignity and

power; and as seven is a number of perfection, and all the heads were crowned, the general meaning of the symbols is the same: But whatever difficulty there may be, in assigning any particular reason of this difference in the figurative representations, (which is of no great importance, while the general view is the same,) all the heads being crowned is a considerable objection against the common interpretation of the seven heads, as relating to the seven forms of government, that should succeed one another in the Roman empire; such as kings, consuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, emperors, and popes: For I cannot find that the consuls, dictators, tribunes, and decemvirs, though supreme magistrates, were ever crowned: whereas our prophecy expressly exhibits all the seven heads as alike crowned; and the papal head over them may be considered as a seventh form of supreme government. (See the note on chap. xvii. 9.)

to Christ, the furious dragon, who, as a *roaring lion*, walks about, seeking whom he may devour, (1 Pet. v. 8) narrowly watched her, like one standing just before her, to see when she should bring forth her beloved offspring, that he might immediately tear it in pieces, as soon as ever it should be born into the world: Which may be considered as a lively figure of the implacable and powerful opposition of Satan, and of those that are under his influence, against the kingdom and gospel of Christ, to prevent their progress in the earth.

5 And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

5 And yet, according to the painful, laborious, and hopeful desires of the church, she brought forth a seed to serve Christ; which in prophetic stile may be called her being *delivered of a man-child*, (Isa. vi. 7, 8.) †; as a *succession* of faithful believers should be thereby propagated in the church, in spite of all the malicious designs and attempts of the devil and his instruments; in so much that, instead of its being utterly extirpated from the earth, it should finally prevail, under Christ its head, to break to pieces all the powers of its enemies, and rule over them with invincible strength and firmness, as with an iron-scepter: And, in the mean while, this lovely birth was taken under the immediate care and protection of God for its preservation, like one raised above the reach of its most powerful and intricate enemies, and lodged secretly as it were, before his throne in heaven; as *Josiah* was hid in the temple of the Lord six years, that the idolatrous *Athaliah* might

not

#### N O T E.

† By the man-child, which the church brought forth, interpreters generally understand Constantine the Great, who was exalted to the imperial throne, established Christianity, and ruled all nations with a rod of iron, unto the subduing of heathen persecution and idolatry, and utterly overthrowing the devil's tyranny, together with the idolatrous priests and persecutors among the Pagans. And I confess, there seems to be something so natural in this, and in a correspondent interpretation of ver. 7; 8. that I should strongly incline to go into it, were it not that I cannot but take this, as well as the 11th and 12th chapters, to be a general representation of the state of the church, during the 1260 years of her being in the wilderness, and of Antichrist's reign. (See the notes on chap. x. 6. and xi. 7.) But as upon every scheme, except that of Grotius and Hammond, (which evidently gives by far too short a time for the numerous events assigned to this period) all Protestants must allow that Constantine's reign was long before this period commenced; and as the

prophetic language is all figurative, it seems requisite, for making the general compendious view in this and the preceding and following chapters uniform, to give those figurative representations such a turn as may best comport with the events that were to come to pass in the time marked out by the prophecy itself, relating to the 1260 years, or "time, times, and half a time," of the church's being in the wilderness, ver. 5, 14. Otherwise, I cannot conceive why these numbers are mentioned in this chapter at all; nor why the dragon is represented as having "ten horns, and seven heads and crowns," ver. 3. (See the note there.) I have therefore fixed upon such an application of events in this chapter as is entirely consistent with the two other general views of this period, that are given in the two chapters between which this stands. And though, as far as I know, my thoughts upon it may be in great measure singular; yet they lye easy before my mind, and are humbly submitted to the judgment of the reader.

not murder him. (1 Chron. xxii. 11, 12. and xxiii. 11,—13.)

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

6 And the church herself, signified by the parent-woman, (*ver.* 1, 2.) was taken effectual care of, as well as those that were *born to God in her, whom the Highest himself would establish*, (Pl. lxxxvii. 5, 6.) and *the gates of hell should not prevail against*, (Matth. xvi. 18.); though, in order to her preservation, she was forced to retire into obscurity, as into a wild and solitary desert, exposed to many difficulties and dangers, as *Israel* were in the wilderness, where God by his kind providence had prepared a place of retreat and refreshment for them, that as he there fed them with *manna*; so his ministering servants should *feed her with knowledge and understanding, as pastors according to his own heart*, (Jer. iii. 15.) for the whole space of his witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which was to be twelve hundred and sixty years. (See the notes on chap. x. 6. and xi. 2.)

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels,

7 And a further representation was made to me of the state of the church, during this period, under the emblem of a terrible war figured out by one in the air \*; wherein *Michael*, the sovereign prince, lord, and head of the angels, (*Dan.* xii. 1. and *Jude*, *ver.* 9.) and his servants, whether ministering spirits, or gospel-preachers, engaged in battle against the great dragon or the devil; and this furious enemy exerted all his power at the head of, and in conjunction with, his demons in hell, and his emissaries, false teachers, and their followers on earth, in opposition to them.

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

8 And the issue of the combat was, that the dragon and his forces could not carry their point for destroying them; so far from it, that they were absolutely defeated in that design, and lost all their authority in the true church of Christ; as being overcome by their faith and patience, and by the breakings out of the light of the gospel; which might point to *the protestant reformation*, when the gospel had a wonderful spread, and several states and kingdoms threw off the anti-christian yoke.

9 And the great dragon

9 And the great dragon himself, at the head of his formidable

#### N O T E.

\* *In heaven* I here take to mean the aerial heaven; because the devil is styled "the prince of the power of the air," (Eph. ii. 2.) and the apostle speaks (chap. vi. 12.) of "spiritual wickedness in high or heavenly places," (*εὐρανίων*). But this may be considered as emblematical of the combats

that are carried on by Christ (who, as many good expositors understand it, is signified by Michael) and his people, on one hand: and by Satan, and his popish adherents, on the other. Or, perhaps, by heaven here, and in *ver.* 8, 10. may be meant the church of Christ on earth.

dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

formidable army, was turned out of the dominion which he before had assumed over those vassals that were now delivered out of his kingdom, who, as long ago as the fall of the human race, beguiled *Eve*, thro' his subtilty, under the form of a serpent, (*Gen. iii. 4.* and *2 Cor. xi. 3.*) who is often called in scripture *the devil*, and, according to the signification of that word, is a malicious and false *accuser of the brethren*, (*ver. 10.*) and is properly stiled *Satan*, who, as that name signifies, is an inveterate and implacable adversary to them; and by his serpentine craft, betrays the carnal people of all nations into error and idolatry, and every other kind of abominable evil: This malicious and powerful adversary had a great downfall in my vision, like one who tumbles headlong from heaven to earth; and his agents and emissaries, as acting under his influence, were cast down from their former power and authority with him; Thereby intimating that Christ and his church, in the days of *the Reformation*, should prevail against the devil and all his instruments, notwithstanding the subtle and furious opposition that would then be made by antichristian powers against the reformed religion among them.

10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

10 Hereupon, methought, I heard a loud acclamation of melodious thanksgiving, joy and praise in the heavenly assembly, with which the church on earth cheerfully joined, saying, Now is the time of great deliverance to the true church of Christ from its idolatrous and persecuting enemies, and of its prosperity and safety; now has God shewn himself strong on behalf of his people; and now is the gospel-kingdom of our God highly exalted in the light and purity of its doctrines and institutions; and now the power and authority (*ἐξουσία*) of his Messiah, as King of kings and Lord of lords, is set up and manifested in great glory: For the devil, that grand adversary of the Christian brethren, is dethroned and defeated in his designs, who sought all opportunities, by his instruments, of laying crimes to their charge, which they were innocent of, to furnish their antichristian enemies with unjust pretences for oppressing them; and who was so insolent as, speaking after the manner of man, unweariedly to bring false accusations of them, on all occasions, by day and night, before our reconciled God, to try whether he could not provoke his wrath against them, as he attempted to do against his servant *Job*, (*chaps. i. ii.*) and against *Josias* the high priest; (*Zech. iii. 1.*) For

all this signal victory, we exult and triumph, and glorify the name of the Lord.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

11 And we cheerfully adore and bless him, in reflection that his saints have gained this glorious conquest over their great adversary, the devil, as working by Popish powers; which they have done, not by any strength or wisdom of their own, but merely through faith in the blood of the Lamb, who was slain, and offered up himself an atoning sacrifice for them; and by means of *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, (Eph. vi. 17.) through their steadfast adherence to it, dependence upon it, and open profession of it, in its uncorrupted purity, which they faithfully bore witness to in their doctrine and conversation: And so bold and upright were they in their holy profession of Christ and his pure gospel, that they valued not their lives, in any comparison with him and his cause; but, like the apostle *Paul*, (Acts xx. 24.) they rather chose to expose themselves to death, than deny, renounce, or disown him and his truths.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

12 Therefore, as on occasion of the Lord's redeeming and comforting his people, and having mercy on his afflicted, the heavens and the earth were called upon to sing and be joyful, (*I/a.* xliv. 23. and xlix. 13.); so let heaven above, and all the saints and angels that dwell therein, and the whole church on earth, rejoice and triumph with them, (*dis turo*) on account of this happy change in the face of its affairs: But, at the same time, its visible members that dwell on the earth, which consists of land and water, and on the continent and the islands of the sea, and especially such of them as are carnal and earthly-minded under a profession of the true faith, may well tremble on account of the calamities they will yet be exposed to\*: For the devil, whose power is not totally destroyed, though much weakened, is come down to distress and pervert you, as much as possible, with the utmost fury and rage; because he finds that his strength is on the declining hand;

#### N O T E.

\* The paraphrase has given several senses of "the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea:" But, perhaps, what relates to the continent and the islands, and chiefly to the earthly-minded members of the visible church, that would be most in danger of falling off by the devil's efforts, may best suit the intention of this part of the prophecy, as pointing to Great Britain and Ireland, and the nations on the continent, which threw off Popery at the Reformation: For the

"Wo to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea," seems, from what follows in the next verses, to refer to the woman or church of Christ; and the "devil's knowing that he had but a short time," is much more fairly applicable to the time of the Reformation, than of the downfall of Paganism in the empire, which has been already about 1400 years ago; and therefore it could scarcely be said then, that the devil knew he had but "a short time."

hand; and that, as he has begun to fall, the time of his doing mischief to the church and cause of Christ shall ere long be brought to its period.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

13 Accordingly, when the devil, as exerting his power under the character of the dragon, that appeared with seven heads and crowns upon them, and ten horns, (*ver. 3.*) found himself so greatly baffled by the *protestant-reformation*, like one cast down from heaven to earth, (*ver. 9.*) and saw that, in spite of all his endeavours to the contrary, pure Christianity had gained so considerable an ascendancy in various countries, he turned all his malice and power, and raised up a new set of instruments †, against the true church, which had been the mother of so fair and numerous an offspring, and had propagated, as by a man-child, the cause of Christ in a succession of converts from age to age, and more especially at the time of the *Reformation*.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

14 And, notwithstanding all these fierce attempts against her, God still took care of her preservation; and as he was said to *bear Israel on eagles wings*, when he brought them out of the land of *Egypt*; (*Exod. xix. 4.*) so the wonderful strength, speed, and safety, with which he would appear for the church at this season, may be represented by his giving her a pair of eagles wings, that she might flee away from the rage of her enemies, though attended with many difficulties, to her place of retirement, which he had provided, during her wilderness-state, (which was not yet come to its full period) for her escaping the fury and subtilty of that old serpent the devil, and his agents; and for her being refreshed and comforted by his word and spirit, and the ministration of his two witnesses, (*chap. xi. 3.* see the note there,) to the end of all her trials and afflictions, which under various forms were to last till the expiration of twelve hundred and sixty years; and may be expressed

#### N O T E.

† The Jesuits, the most subtle and active of all the popish emissaries, were established, as a society, by Ignatius Loyola in the year 1534, soon after the Reformation, which was begun by Luther in the year 1517, and was carried into an open protest against the severe popish decrees at Spire in Germany, by several princes of the empire in the year 1549, which was the original of the name *Protestants*, by which the reformed churches are called to this day: And how indefatigably numerous swarms of Jesuits have been in their endeavours to overthrow the Reformation; and what crucifies the Duke of

Alva used in the Netherlands, and Queen Mary in England; and how the Council of Trent, the Parisian and Irish massacres, and numberless other efforts of popish princes have been spirited up to suppress and extirpate the Protestant religion, is so familiarly known, as are all the rest of the facts, corresponding to the interpretation given of this chapter, with respect to the time of the Reformation, that it is quite needless to quote particular authorities, which may be seen in all the historians of those times; and are almost in every one's hands.

expressed, in the file of the prophet *Daniel*, (chap. viii. 25. and xii. 7.) by a *time* or year, two *times* or years, and *half a time* or half a year, which make together twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. (See the note on chap. x. 6.)

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

15 And this malignant serpent, the devil, (*ver. 9.*) did his utmost to prevent the church's escape to any place of retreat or safety, at the time of *the Reformation*, by pouring out a flood of error and persecution after her, to sink and drown her before she could reach it; which may fitly be represented by a torrent of water poured out of his mouth, that by the force of anti-christian-errors and enemies, which he raised up against her, he might pervert and ruin her, as by a mighty flood that bears down all before it; Which might point to the vigorous attempts of the Jesuits, and others of the Popish party, to overwhelm *the Reformation* by craft and power, before it was well established. (See the note on *ver. 13.*)

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

16 And yet, as great floods of water are swallowed up in caverns of the earth, to prevent the dreadful inundations which they would otherwise have made; so God in his providence inclined the hearts of many to interpose for the protection and shelter of his faithful servants and people, from the fury of the devil and his papal agents, that they might not be swallowed up by these attempts to destroy them; Which might point to some secular powers, such as king *Henry* the eighth, and other princes, who, under the influence of temporal interests, favoured their righteous cause; and to some warm contenders for civil and religious liberty, who, though not themselves sincere Christians, detested persecution of all sorts; and so took the part of *Protestants* to prevent their being over-run by anti-christian-powers, and their tyrannical impositions upon conscience.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

17 And that old old serpent and blood-thirsty dragon, the devil, inclusive of his Popish instruments, was so enraged at this unexpected powerful assistance to the church of Christ, that he renewed his attacks with the utmost violence upon all he could possibly come at, of her spiritual children, whom by former methods he could not overcome; and who were a holy remnant reserved for God by his grace, and were faithful in having an universal respect to his commands, and in maintaining both a doctrinal and practical witness to the purity of the gospel, and of all its ordinances or worship, according to Christ's institutions; Which might point



point at the last vigorous efforts of antichristian power that it should ever make against the reformed church, towards the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the beast's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth \*.

### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How beautiful and glorious is the church of Christ, as lifted up above this world, and shining in illustrious rays of the Sun of righteousness, and of the pure apostolic doctrine of the gospel; and how earnest are her desires, prayers and endeavours, that, in her, many converts may be born to God! And her labour shall not be in vain; for when Sion travails she brings forth her children.—But what a bitter enemy is Satan to the church's prosperity and increase! He watches to devour all her spiritual seed, as soon as they are born into the gospel-kingdom; and he with fury and subtilty under all the antichristian forms of a monstrous dragon, with seven heads and crowns and ten horns; and of an old serpent and false accuser of the brethren, sets himself to oppose, vilify and destroy them. How vain would he and his Popish agents swallow them up, as with a flood! And how indefatigable are they, from time to time, to renew their war against them! But though they may be suffered to drive them into a wilderness of solitude and affliction, they shall find safety and refreshment there, as if taken up to the throne of God for protection and comfort, till the days of their mourning shall be ended: And how certainly shall victory fall on their side, when their warfare shall be accomplished! Christ and his ministering servants, whether angels or men, will take their part against the great dragon and his whole *Pege* of infernal and antichristian-instruments; and therefore, in the issue, he will defeat all their forces and throw them down from their tyrannical dominion.—Though the worst of woes, may fall on carnal protestants, Christ will ever have a reserve of a chosen remnant, that shall keep his commandments, and maintain the purity of his doctrines and ordinances; and when they are most exposed to persecuting enemies, the earth shall help the woman; and she herself shall obtain the best of conquests over them, thro' faith in the blood of the Lamb, and by the light and power of his word and Spirit, even though it should cost many of her children their lives to abide by their testimony to him. O what matter of thanksgiving and praise is this! How should all the saints on earth rejoice and triumph, with the holy angels and spirits of just men made perfect, in heaven, for the salvation which is brought to the church in a display of the glory of the kingdom of God and of the power of his Christ! This glory has begun to open in the reformation from popery. But O when shall the twelve hundred and sixty years of her wilderness-state come to its full period? it wears off apace: And when the power of antichrist shall be demolished, He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

### C H A P. XIII.

*A third general description of the state of the church, during the same period of 1260 years under antichrist's reign, who is represented by the figure*

#### N O T E.

\* If this relates, as I think, to the last push of popish power which is still to come against the Protestant cause, and will issue in the entire defeat of its enemies, then the whole series of events sufficiently answers the summary prophetic description contained in

this chapter, of the state of the church quite through the 1260 years of her being in the wilderness, and of Antichrist's reign, in full agreement with the first and third general view that is given of this period in the preceding and next following chapters.

figure of a wild beast rising out of the sea, to whom the dragon gave his power, 1,—10. And another representation is made of the same by the figure of a beast, which had two horns like a lamb, and spoke as a dragon, exercising all the power of the former beast; 11,—15. And obliging all to worship its image, and receive its mark, as persons devoted to it; with an admonition to consider the time of the rise of the beast, in order to our knowing the time of its fall, 16,—18.

## TEXT.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

## PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the two preceding summary visions, (*chap. xi. and xii.*) relating to the state of the church and its antichristian enemies, for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years, methought, I stood upon the sand of the sea-shore; and there had another vision, relating to the same period, in which was represented a savage wild beast, (*verse*) as an emblem, in prophetic stile, of an *Empire*; and this, being the *Roman-empire*, signified by the fourth and last beast in *Daniel's* vision, (*chap. vii. 2, 3, 7, 8.*) seemed to rise up out of the sea, as an emblem of the tumultuous state of the nations, (*Rev. xvii. 15.*) like the troubled sea in a storm, when the barbarous *Goths* and *Vandals* would break in upon the empire, and it would be divided into *ten kingdoms*; intimating, that out of those commotions this antichristian-power would rise, which appeared under the emblem of *seven heads*, to signify, that the seat of its dominion would be at *Rome*, which stands upon seven hills, and that it would be the seventh successive form of supreme government, (*chap. xvii. 9, 10.* see the note there); and under the emblem of *ten horns*, to signify the ten kingdoms that would be united under, and subjected to its power; and *ten crowns*, one upon each horn, to signify the regal authority it would then exercise over all the ten kingdoms; And upon its seven heads were wrote the name of blasphemy, and it was full of such names, (*chap. xvii. 3.*) to signify that the power of the seventh form of government would be employed to set up, maintain, and propagate idolatry, in the worshipping of images, and of saints and angels, which is a blasphemous indignity thrown upon the unalienable honour of the only living and true God, and is justly stiled *blasphemy* in the writings of the prophets, (*Isa. lrv. 7. and Ezek. ix. 27.*)

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the

2 And, methought, this beast had the appearance of a leopard, only his feet resembled those of a bear; and his mouth was terribly frightful, like the mouth of a ravenous lion; to intimate that all the cruelty, subtilty and power of the three preceding monarchies, represented

the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

represented in *Daniel's* vision, under these figures, (*chap. vii. 4,—6*) would be united in this *Roman* papal empire: And the devil, who in my last vision, relating to this period, was represented as exerting his power, by the antichristian-beast under the form of a great red dragon of seven heads and so many crowns, and ten horns, (*chap. xii. 3.* see the note there,) was still more distinctly and fully represented in *this*, as conveying all his tyrannical power of civil government to this savage wild beast, and placing him at *Rome, the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth*, (*chap. xvii. 18.*) and which had been the seat of persecuting monarchs of the empire in its *Pagan* state: And he invested him, *whose coming is after the working of Satan*, with great authority to promote superstition and idolatry, by *all power, and signs, and lying wonders*, (*2 Thess. ii. 9.*) and to persecute the true church of Christ with the utmost severity.

3 And I perceived that one of the seven forms of government, signified by the seven heads of the beast, was so desperately wounded, as seemed to be past all hope of recovery; to intimate, that the imperial power under the *Roman* Cæsars would be subverted; and yet the wound, to all appearance mortal, was surprizingly healed; which may be considered as referring to the erection of the imperial government under the Pope at *Rome*, from whence the supreme authority of the empire had been entirely removed, during the exarchate of *Ravenna*, without any human prospect of *Rome's* ever being restored to its ancient dignity again: (See the note on *chap. viii. 12.*) And upon this before-unexpected and unlikely revival of the power of *Rome* under the temporal dominion of the Pope, all the nations of the empire were astonished at it; and ran with veneration and delight after the beast, as people used to do after a strange and grand sight, full of wonder at his amazing rise and power, riches, honour and grandeur. (*Chap. xvii. 8.*)

4 And the generality of them paid not only civil, but idolatrous worship, in effect, and by just construction, to the devil himself, who before had been represented, as exerting his tyrannical power, by antichrist, under the form of *the great red dragon*, (see the note on *chap. xii. 3.*) and had now consigned it over to him, under the form of *the beast*, to whom, and to whose arbitrary and idolatrous injunctions and decrees, they readily submitted and yielded implicit faith and obedience; looking upon him as a sort of deity, and the universal

3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

versal head of the empire, as well as of the church : And they wondering at the uncontrollable authority and power with which he reigned, cried out with pleasing admiration and triumph, What power on earth is equal to this of the Pope, signified by the beast ? What prince or potentate is able to resist, or contend with him, or stand before him ? All must and shall submit to him, and vail to his authority over them, which he will assume by disposing of crowns and kingdoms, and treating kings and emperors with indignity and contempt at his pleasure †.

§ And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

5 And by the devil's influence, and God's permission, he opened his mouth, as with great terror, so with high swelling words of vanity, talking at a haughty and imperious rate in promises and threatnings, and in blasphemous boasts of divine authority, and claims of religious, as well as civil homage to be paid to him, who would *exalt and magnify himself above every God*, (Dan. xi. 36.) And he was permitted to exercise his idolatrous and persecuting power, more or less, thro' his whole reign, which was to last for the space of forty and two prophetic months, which amount to twelve hundred and sixty years, and make up the same period of time that is allotted to the church's being in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. (See the note on chap. x. 6.)

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

6 Yea, he was represented as *speaking marvellous things against the God of gods*, (Dan. xi. 36.) and *sitting as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*, (2 Thess. ii. 4.) and arrogantly assuming the prerogatives of God in pretending to forgive sins, and usurping authority over mens consciences, and establishing such idolatrous laws and canons, as are a dishonour and reproach to his sacred name : And, methought, he went on with his blasphemous reproaches of *the church of God* \*, (in which he after a special and gracious manner dwells, as he did in his tabernacle and temple of old) stigmatizing them as heretics and apostates ; and robbing them of their glory, by setting up for an universal headship over them ; which belongs to

Christ

#### N O T E.

† A most shocking account of the extravagant pride, and tyrannical intolerance of Popes, in treating the persons, crowns, and dignities of emperors and princes, may be seen in Dr More's theological works, p. 490.

\* By his tabernacle: some understand the temple of Christ's body, in which he, the

eternal " Word, who is God, dwelt, or tabernacled on earth : (John i. 3. 14.) And this may be said to be blasphemed in the sacrifice of *the mass* by a pretended transubstantiation, and offering it up again and again, as though by one offering he had not perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Christ only : He likewise disgraced the names and characters of departed saints, and the angels in heaven, by fabulous legends about them, and turning them to an idolatrous use in paying the religious worship to them, which they detest, (*chap. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.*) and in anathematizing the faithful servants of Christ, that are citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and his holy martyrs that have their mansions in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

7 And he was permitted by divine providence, and spirited up by Satan, to set himself against the professors of Christ, who were visible saints, by violent persecutions and wars upon those that should refuse to submit to his authority : By which means he was suffered to pervert some, and deprive others of their estates, liberty, and lives ; and to exercise his tyrannical power over all nations of various lineages and languages thro' the vast extent of his empire.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

8 And his power and authority, in the whole of his dominion, was represented to be so prevalent, that all the inhabitants of the empire would be brought into either a forced, or willing obedience to his cruel and idolatrous decrees ; except those whom God of his own mere grace has chosen, as his peculiar people, and knows as particularly and distinctly by name, as if they were written down, in a literal sense, in the Lamb's book of life ; in which all are, as it were, registered, who were given him of the Father, to be redeemed and brought safe to glory, in virtue of his sacrifice, which may be said to have been slain, not only in the purpose of God from eternity, (*see 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.*) but in the first promise, and in its typical representations and prophecies, and saving efficacy, from the beginning of the world, ever since the fall of man.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

9 If any one is desirous to understand the meaning and importance of these prophecies, relating to this new antichristian power, Let him seriously attend to what has been said about it, for his caution against holding any communion with it ; and to what is going to be immediately added, for his encouragement, support and comfort, which is this :

10 He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity : He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

10 The great antichrist, who, during this period, takes so many captive at his will, and tyrannizes over their consciences, shall not always prevail against the church of Christ ; but shall at length be himself taken captive and reduced to an abject state, and they shall triumph over him : He who has been the cause of eternal death to some, by means of his pernicious errors, and the cause of temporal death to others by martyrdoms

doms and wars, must himself, at the expiration of his term, be utterly destroyed, soul and body, by the sword of men, and the sword of the Spirit for ever; What measure he metes to them, God will measure to him again, (*Matth. vii. 2.*) It requires a great deal of faith to believe this, and of patience to wait for it; and as the people of God, during the reign of the beast, will have great occasion for the exercise of both these graces; so here is a consideration well suited to support their patience at the worst of times in hope of deliverance; and to strengthen and animate their faith to persevere and bear up with Christian fortitude under all tribulations, as believing that what is foretold of the downfall of antichrist shall surely be accomplished, in God's appointed time, to his glory, and their triumph over all his and their enemies.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

11 After this, was presented to my view another form of a beast, which, though for substance the same with that but now described, (*ver. 1, &c.*) may on account of its shape, and in different considerations of it, be called another beast\*, which rose up from the earth beneath, as issuing out of a worldly temper, and of the bottomless pit: (*Chap. xii. 7.*) And he appeared with two horns, resembling those of a lamb, a symbol of his (spiritual, as well as temporal dominion, who seemed to put on a specious air of meekness and gentleness, humility and purity, like a lamb; but, in reality, his anathemas and cruel injunctions, enforced by the civil arm, were as terrible, as the rage of a dragon.

12 And

#### N O T E.

\* The obscurities and difficulties that lie upon all conjectures I have met with about the meaning of this second beast, most of which may be seen in Mr Lowman's note upon it, are so great and many, that it would answer no good end for the reader to be puzzled with them, as I myself have been; nor can I be fully satisfied with that, which I am most inclined to, though with some singularity, viz. that this second beast, which exercises the same power, and has the same mark, and name, and number, with the first, is another representation of the same papal empire set in a different point of light, chiefly (I do not say wholly) in its ecclesiastical, as the former was chiefly in its temporal power. And it is no uncommon thing for the same state to be set out in Scripture by different emblems, as the Persian empire is by a bear and a ram, (*Dan. vii. 5. and viii. 3.*) and the Grecian by a leopard and a he-goat, (*Dan. vii. 6. and viii. 5.*) and our Lord himself is represented, in this book of prophecy, some times as a lion, and at

others as a lamb, and under various other characters. But whether I am right in my thoughts of the second beast, or not, it is no great doubt with me, but that it relates to some form or other of the popish power, during the term of forty-two prophetic months, or 1260 years, which are pointed out in the summary view that is given in this and the two preceding chapters, as the time of the beast's reign, and of the woman's being in the wilderness, (see the note on chap. x. 6.) And this is all that I think of moment in the present case, which ever way the vision of the beast, as appearing like a "lamb with two horns," &c. be interpreted. But "the number of the beast," ver. 13. at the close of the description of this second beast, manifestly relates to the date of Antichrist's power, which is signified by the first beast. This seems to be a strong objection to all such interpretations, as make the second beast to be emblematical of any different person or power, that rose at any considerable distance of years after the first.

11 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

12 And under pretence of being the universal head of the church, he, as shewn to me in vision, assumes and makes use of all the power and authority, (*ver. 12.*) that had been before represented as exercised by the beast, which appeared in a former vision under the figure of a monster of seven heads and ten horns, with a crown on each of them, (*ver. 1.*); and by violent methods of excommunications and persecutions, thro' the assistance of secular powers, he forces the carnally-minded inhabitants of that part of the earth, which is under his dominion, to pay all the religious homage, obedience and submission to him under this new form of his appearing, as had been given to the monstrous beast that was represented under another figure in the foregoing vision, (*ver. 3.*) as recovering sovereign empire at Rome, after it seemed to have been mortally wounded past recovery.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men;

13 And, the more effectually to compass his tyrannical and idolatrous design, he pretends to miraculous powers; insomuch that, as *Elijah*, to vindicate the character of the Jehovah of *Israel*, as the only true God, obtained by prayer, that fire should come down from heaven, at one time to consume the burnt-sacrifice, and at another to consume the captains and their fifties, which were sent by King *Ahaziah* to apprehend him, (*1 Kings xviii. 37, 38.* and *2 Kings i. 10, 12.*); so this two horned beast seems to do like miracles, and that publicly in the view of many spectators, to confirm his false doctrines and usurped authority; which may be considered as pointing to the *lying wonders*, (*2 Thes. ii. 9.*) and numerous sham-miracles of the Romish church, which are boasted of and recorded in their legends; and at their dreadful thunderbolts by public anathemas, in which they curse the excommunicated with bell, book, and candle, as though they would bring fire down from heaven upon them; and which are executed, by delivering them over to the secular power to put them to death by *burning*, or other tortures, which are indeed *fiery trials*.

14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they

14 And he imposes upon the subjects of his empire that are influenced by earthly things, deluding them into superstition and idolatry, by means of those feigned miracles which he pretended to have power to work, under the countenance, approbation, and encouragement of the secular arm, the emblem of which was his *speaking as a dragon*, (*ver. 11.*); and he persuaded, enticed, and even commanded these earthly-minded people to set him up as an idol, and pay their homage to him, as to the

they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

the image of the beast, which was represented in the former vision to have recovered sovereign empire at Rome, after it was thought to have been wounded unto death in its *sixth* head; (*ver.* 3. 12.); which may be considered as emblematical of their deifying the Pope, and of all their image-worship, and paying blind obedience to the whole system of popery, which was set up by his authority.

15 And he had means sufficient in his own hands to establish his authority, as the living image of the former beast, together with the authority of all his idolatrous constitutions, and to enforce it with vigour and efficacy, that, like the imagined living oracles of the heathens, this living image of the beast might both speak blasphemies and terrors in publishing its arbitrary decrees and sanguinary laws, and might execute them by excommunications, pains, and penalties, even to death itself, upon all that should refuse to worship, or to acknowledge, honour, and submit to the injunctions of this image of the beast, according to the representation that in the present vision is given of it; which may be considered, as pointing to the severe laws and practices of the Romish church, in its proceedings against all that renounce its authority, and are deemed heretics.

16 And that the true sons of the apostate church might be the more evidently distinguished from others, who would not comply with his authority, he ordered that persons of all ranks and degrees within the dominion of the papacy, high and low, rich and poor, masters and servants, should make an open profession of their acknowledging it; which may be figured out by the emblem of a visible mark, impressed on their *right hand*, to denote their activity in his cause, or on their *foreheads*, to denote their visible profession of devotedness to him; in allusion to the custom of masters setting a mark upon their slaves, to signify that they were their own property, and

#### N O T E.

\* Martial, in his *epigrams*, (lib. 2. *epig.* 29. and lib. 3. *epig.* 21.) speaks of slaves being marked on their foreheads; and of one who endeavoured to hide the mark of his slavery, by putting a patch or plaister upon his forehead, to cover it. And Dean Prideaux tells us, (*Council.* vol. ii. book 2.) that Ptolemy Philopater, to degrade the Jews of Alexandria, ordered "that all of them that should come to be enrolled, in the third rank among the common people of Egypt, should at the time of their enrollment have the mark of an *ivy-leaf*, the badge of his God Bacchus, by an hot iron

impressed upon them; and that all those who should refuse to be thus enrolled and stigmatized with the said mark, should be made slaves; and that if any of them should stand out against this decree, he should be put to death." And the custom of the heathens printing marks upon their bodies, signifying the deity to which they were devoted, is manifestly referred to in *Levit.* xix. 28. (See Ainsworth on the place.) And Grotius shows that servants were principally marked on their foreheads, and soldiers on their hands. (*Vid. in loc.*)



and of heathen - idolaters marking themselves with some figure, in token of what deity they were devoted to.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

17 And so strict and severe were these orders †, that no one whatever was allowed the common privilege of merchandize or commerce in buying or selling, much less the pretendedly more valuable privilege of buying or selling pardons, dispensations, and indulgencies, &c. except those that made an open profession of the popish religion, and thereby wore the distinguishing badge of the beast, and bore his name, like children of their own father, as the *Papists* do of the *Pope*, who in *Latin* is called *Papa*; or that took upon them the profession of that system of erroneous doctrines, which he established, and are characteristic of him, as the great antichrist.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three-score and six.

18 It is an instance of adorable wisdom in God, for reasons best known to him, to foretel events of this nature in such a covert manner: And it requires spiritual wisdom and application of thought, with humble dependence on divine guidance, to understand the mystical descriptions of the antichristian beast. Whoever is minded, and has any skill for inquiries of this sort, let him carefully employ it in a close and diligent search into the number of years henceforth to come, when this idolatrous power is to rise in its full strength, that he may thereby learn, who, or what is meant by this representation of it; and consequently, at what time its period of twelve hundred and sixty years shall expire. The finding out of this need not be absolutely despaired of: For its rise in its compleat state is to be discovered by computing from the time of this vision a number of years, which is commonly used by men in their way of reckoning; and that number is \* *six hundred and sixty-six*.

R E C O L -

#### N O T E S.

† Pareus observes in his note on this verse, that Pope Martin the Fifth, in his Bull annexed to the Council of Constance, enjoined by an oath, that all who professed themselves to be devoted to the Roman See, should expel all those that do not hold the faith and communion of the church, as scabby sheep, which infect the flock of the Lord; and should not permit them to preach, nor to dwell among them, nor to make any contracts or bargains, or exercise any trade among them: nor to enjoy with Christians the comforts of humanity. And Mr Cradock refers to the Council of Lateran's anathematizing all that entertained any of the Waldenses, or traded with them; and to a synod in France, which forbade

any commerce with heretics in buying or selling.

\* The obscurity in which the number 666 is left in prophecy, calls for studious modest inquiry, and humble prayer to settle the meaning of it. The learned Mr Potter, in an elaborate discourse on this number, endeavours to adjust it by extracting the square root of 666, which, with a fraction of 41, is 25, which multiplied into itself, and adding the fraction, gives the number 666, and adding 25 to the year of our Lord 33, makes 59, and this, added to 666, makes 724; when, as some think, the beast arrived to its state of manhood, and the war about worshipping of images began. Others have thought that

## RECOLLECTIONS.

In how many forms doth the papal antichrist appear! sometimes with the meekness and gentleness of a lamb to deceive, and at others with the fury and cruelty of a dragon to destroy; both uniting to pervert and ruin the church of Christ. With what blasphemies doth he open his mouth! With what lying wonders doth he impose upon earthly-minded men! With what uncontrolled authority doth he command and force his subjects to submit to idolatrous image-worship and all the abominations of popery! And with what dreadful severity doth he curse all that will not openly profess absolute and blind obedience to him and his decrees! This is the plain mark of the beast; and they that have not this mark upon them, whether they be of high or low degree, must, according to his orders, be deprived of the common privileges of civil society and commerce, and of life itself. Alas! How many nations and people are deluded into fatal errors, to their eternal perdition, by his allurements on one hand, and terrors on the other! None under his dominion can be secured against it, but God's elect that are written in the Lamb's book of life, the virtue of whose sacrifice has been effectual to salvation, through faith in him, ever since the entrance of sin, soon after the creation of the world. But how much soever the *Romish* potentate may distress these by wars, persecutions, and martyrdoms, to the killing of their bodies, he shall never prevail to pervert and destroy their souls. And blessed be God, there is a certain limited time, set in prophecy, for his utter downfall; when all the evil he has done to others, shall in righteous vengeance be retaliated upon him, to the glory of the Redeemer, and the happiness of his people. How delightful is the prospect of this; and what a support to faith and patience under all antichristian oppressions! Did we we but certainly know when to begin the computation of the twelve hundred and sixty years of his reign from six hundred and sixty-six, we could be at no loss to say when they shall end. Such hints are given of this in prophecy, as became the wisdom of God; and we may hope to come at some knowledge of their meaning by humble inquiries into them, with a dependence on divine light and guidance. Let those of us therefore, who are desirous of understanding these things, seriously consider what is said in prophetic writings about them; and comfort ourselves with assured hopes, that, in God's prescribed time, the Church shall get through all her troubles, and triumph over all her enemies; and that then what we know not now, we should know with the clearest evidence of their exact accomplishment.

## C H A P. XIV.

*To comfort the church under the melancholy representation which had been made in the foregoing visions of the 1260 years of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the churches being in the wilderness, and*

## N O T E.

this number might be made out by the Greek word *Latēinos* (λατῖνος) which signifies the Latin church, the numeral letters of which make just 666, thus,

Λ	α	τ	ι	ν	ο	ς
30.	1.	300.	5.	10.	50.	70.

which, added together, amount to that number. But as these, however ingenious, are very uncertain conjectures, I have rather chose to fall in with such writers, as seem more probably to compute the number 666 from the time when the apostle John received and wrote this vision, which, says Mr Lowman, taking the general received opi-

nion, was about the year of our Lord 94; and adding 666 to 94 makes 760, which reaches but about four or five years beyond the rise of the beast, as supposed to be about the year 755, or 756, when the Pope became a temporal prince, and received the investiture of Peter's patrimony from Pepin king of France, and might possibly be about 4 or 5 years in taking actual and complete possession of it. (See Mr Lowman's note.) According to this account, antichrist's reign is to expire about the year of our Lord 2015, or 2016, as may appear by adding 1260 to 755 or 756.

of the reign of antichrist, a chorus of the heavenly church is introduced in another vision, as celebrating the praises of God, in the presence of the Lamb, for their happiness, who, as a virgin-company, had continued faithful to Christ and his cause under that period, 1,—5. Then follows a vision of three angels; one proclaiming, in a way of prediction, the everlasting gospel which should be preached at the Reformation; another, the downfall of Babylon, the same with the antichristian-beast; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God which should be poured out upon the worshippers of the beast, together with the blessedness of them that die in the Lord, 6,—13. To this is added a vision of Christ himself, with a sharp sickle in his hand, and of an angel crying to him to execute judgment on his enemies, as ripe for destruction, under the emblem of a harvest ripe for cutting down, which he accordingly did, 14,—16. And a vision of two angels more; one of which had also a sharp sickle; and the other cried to him to proceed to further executions of judgments, without delay, upon the antichristian-party, that had filled up the measure of their iniquities, which was done with dreadful vengeance under the emblem of a vintage fully ripe, and trodden in the wine-press of God's wrath, 17,—20.

## TEXT.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

## PARAPHRASE.

AT the close of the preceding visions, (*chaps. xi. xii. xiii.*) which opened the most grievous scenes before me, relating to the state of the church's afflictions, and antichrist's reign, for twelve hundred and sixty years, I was immediately favoured with another, of a most delightful and encouraging nature, for the relief and comfort of the church under all the tribulations of the foregoing period. I looked with earnest desire to see what should next be revealed; and, behold! with admiration and joy, I again had a vision of the true Lamb of God, who had been, (*chap. v. 6.*) as standing with victory and triumph on mount Sion, the city of the living God, where Jesus the mediator is: (*Heb. xii. 22, 24.*) And with him I saw the hundred and forty-four thousand, which had before been symbolically represented to me as his sealed ones, (*chap. viii. 4.*) to intimate, that during the whole reign of antichrist none of them were lost: All which appeared with the mark of God his Father's name visibly written on their foreheads, to denote that they were his peculiar people, who had made an open, an honourable profession of Christ and his gospel in the worst of times, and were entirely devoted to him, as his faithful servants, in opposition to all those that had the mark of the beast. (See the note on *chap. xiii. 16.*)

a And I heard a voice from heaven,

2 And, methought, I heard a melodious voice of joy and praise from among this triumphing assembly in

ven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

heaven; the voice of a vast multitude, as signified by *many waters*, (chap. xvii. 1, 15.); and a voice as loud as a great clap of thunder: and it was exceeding harmonious in mine ears, like the music of temple-worship on solemn festivals; where harpers played upon their harps, and others joined with their musical instruments, in charming concert with the voices. (1 Chron. xxv. 1,—7. and Ps. lxxviii. 25.)

3 And this glorious company united, as with one heart and voice, in singing a lofty hymn of  *blessing, honour, glory, and power to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*; (chap. v. 13.) A psalm or song of praise, of a most excellent nature, and new strain, for redeeming love, as suited to all the light, grace, and purity, of the gospel-revelation. They were employed in this solemn act of worship in the presence of God, bowing with the most humble and adoring prostration before him, as sitting on the throne; (chap. iv. 10.) and in the presence of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers; and of the four-and-twenty elders, the representatives of the church, (see the notes on chap. iv. 4, 6.) And so spiritual and sublime was this song, that none could fully understand it, or taste its sweetness, and join heartily in it, but those, that are symbolically represented by the hundred and forty-four thousand, who were redeemed by the blood of Christ, (chap. v. 9.) and, in consequence thereof, by his power and grace, from among the rest of mankind upon earth, and particularly of the antichristian part of them.

4 These are the holy and happy souls, who, in the days of anticrist's reign, did not defile themselves with idolatry of the *Roman church*, that *great whore of Babylon, and mother of harlots, with whom many committed fornication* or spiritual whoredom, (chap. xvii. 1, 2, 5) as idolatry is often styled by the prophets: (See Ezek. xvi.) For they are like pure and chaste virgins, espoused to Christ, their one and only husband, (2 Cor. xi. 2.) and, as such, would never go into spiritual adultery in worshipping images, saints, or angels; or applying to any mediator but Christ. These are of those that keep close to the Lamb of God, in their dependence alone on the merit and virtue of his sacrifice, for pardon and all salvation, and in their faithful adherence to all his doctrines, ordinances, and moral commandments; following his guidance and example in every duty, trial, and affliction, in which he went before them, and called them to come after him, as sheep after

after their great Shepherd, till he should bring them safe to glory. These were redeemed to God, by his precious blood, from among *every kindred and tongue, and people and nation* of mankind, (see the note on chap. v. 9.) and were delivered by his grace from all the antichristian-party, and their sins and errors; they being a holy people, consecrated to God the Father, and to the Lamb who was slain; and being a pledge of many more, that should be so; even as *the first-fruits* were holy and consecrated to the Lord, and were an earnest of the following harvest.

5 And in their mantle was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

5 And there was no designing hypocrisy or prevailing deceit in them; but they were faithful and upright, in their profession of Christ, and testimony against all idolatry and corruptions in doctrine and worship; and in all that they said: For in their governing behaviour and conscience toward God, they are *without blame before him in love*, (Eph. i. 4.) and are accepted as completely righteous in his sight, who imputes not iniquity to them, but the righteousness of Christ, (Rom. iv. 6,—8. compared with Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.) in which he looks upon them, and they appear without any charge of guilt before his throne.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

6 And as a further encouragement to faith, hope, and patience, I beheld an angel flying through the air, as one did before, (chap. viii. 13.) but now with a different and more comfortable message; and *that* was to notify the preaching of glad tidings of great joy, as contained in the gospel of the ever-blessed God, which, for substance, is unchangeably the same, ever since the publication of it in the first promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) and never shall be abolished as the ceremonial law was, but shall issue in eternal life. The angel proclaimed, that this gospel should be preached to the inhabitants of the earth, even to all sorts of people among them, of what nation, lineage, or language sever; Which may be considered as a prediction of God's raising up faithful ministers at the *Protestant Reformation*, who should preach the pure uncorrupted gospel of Christ, and give solemn warnings against all corruptions of his word and ordinances, according to what this angel spoke, as representative of them.

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judging is come: and worship him that

7 Saying to all people, with great earnestness, zeal, and fervour, as with a strong voice, which might be heard far and wide, and demanded attention, See to it that ye worship and serve God in spirit and truth according to his word, as the only rule of faith and obedience, in opposition to human inventions and traditions,

complying with image-worship, or other parts of Popish superstition and idolatry; and shall make an open profession of all this; like bearing its distinguishing mark on his forehead; or shall be active in serving its interest, like setting his hand to it, (see the note on *chap. xiii. 16.*) he will do it at his utmost peril.

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

10 Be he who or what he will, he shall feel the weight of divine vengeance: As he drank of the intoxicating wine of the great whore's fornication, in practising idolatry with her, (*ver. 8.*) he shall drink of the wine of God's just fury, (*Jer. xxv. 15, 16.*) which, like the strongest deadly composition, is prepared without mixture of mercy, and is poured out with dreadful abhorrence of such an one, as into a cup filled with his provoked wrath; and he shall be punished with agonizing pain, as with the torment of burning fire and brimstone, in the sight of the holy angels, as witnesses and executioners of it, (*Matth. xiii. 49, 50.*) and before the face of the Lamb of God, as Judge of all, who will pass a righteous sentence upon such an one, and will behold his deserved misery, without relenting, or affording any help or pity.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

11 And so horrible was the representation of the punishment of such offenders, that, methought, I saw the smoke of the fire which tormented them: ascending up incessantly with dismal darkness, as from a fire which shall not be quenched to all eternity; (*Mark. ix. 43, 44.*) And they, like miserable wretches that are in the bitterest anguish day and night, have no intermission, ease or, respite of their torment, who yield themselves up to the authority of the antichristian-beast, under any form of its appearing; and this shall be the deplorable condition of every one who openly professes obedience and devotedness to it, as though its name were printed on his forehead. (See the note on *chap. xiii. 16.*)

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

12 In this view of things, we see the trials that the patience of the saints will be put to, and the honour with which it will appear and be crowned at last, in the accomplishment of what they patiently waited for: Here we see who they are, that notwithstanding all oppressions by antichristian-enemies, keep close to the word of God, as the only rule of their faith, worship, and obedience, and faithfully conform to it in heart and life; and that maintain the purity of the doctrines and institutions of the Lord Jesus, as what they sincerely believe, profess, and practise upon this sole authority, in opposition to all the corruptions, traditions, and impositions of men.

that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

tions, with holy reverence of him and fear of offending him by idolatry, or any other iniquity; and that ye glorify him, by humble adorations of his divine being, and perfections, and his holy providence; and by ascribing all salvation to his free and sovereign grace, through the only Mediator, in opposition to the merit of good works, and the mediation of saints and angels: For the time is now come, in which he will begin to execute judgments upon his antichristian enemies. And let all your worship be offered up to the great God, through Jesus Christ, and, in opposition to all creatures, to him only, (*chap. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.*) who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sea, and springs of water, and of all things contained therein.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

8 And after this, there followed another angel with most joyful tidings to the church, giving them notice, that, in God's due time their great antichristian-enemy should be utterly destroyed, an earnest of which was given in the *Protestant Reformation*, saying in the very terms that had been used concerning the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (*Isa. xxi. 9.*) and in prophetic stile, which speaks of things to come as though they were already past; and doubling the expression to give the strongest assurance of its certain accomplishment, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*; Thereby intimating that, as the ancient *Babylon* did actually fall, according to the prophecy, so antichristian *Rome*, that great city, which may be called mystical *Babylon* for its haughtiness, persecutions and idolatries, should as certainly be destroyed in its appointed time; because, as men use to be overcome by strong wine, and lewd women are said to entice their lovers to fornication, by giving them philters or love-portions; so by the allurements of riches, honour, and pleasure, and the deceits of lying wonders, she had intoxicated all nations under her dominion, and prevailed upon them to have fellowship with her in idolatrous worship, which is frequently represented by the prophets, as spiritual whoredom, that incenses the wrath of God against the practisers of it.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

9 And a third angel succeeded the two last, with tidings as terrible to the antichristian party as the two former were comfortable to the faithful servants of the Lord: But he gave them fair warning before-hand, saying with a thundering voice, enough to strike terror into all that heard it, If any one in these days of light, and after these plain notices, will still obstinately persist in paying religious homage to the antichristian-beast, which has been described under various forms, (*chap. xiii.*) and in submitting to his authority, and complying

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, faith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

13 And for their further support and comfort under all tribulations, I heard a voice from heaven, like that which came from the excellent glory relating to our blessed Lord, (2 Pet. i. 17.) saying to me, Write in your narrative of these prophetic visions, that they who die in the faith of Christ, united to him as members of his mystical body, and shall be found in him\*, (Phil. iii. 9.) as well as they who suffer martyrdom for Christ, are and shall be unspeakably happy from the time of their death to all eternity: Yea, the spirit of prophecy, whose testimony is infallibly true, positively assures them, from this time forward, of the certainty and excellence of this blessedness, which is so great, that, at the end of their trials on earth, they shall rest with sweet refreshment from all their labours and sufferings for Christ, from all their spiritual conflicts with sin, Satan, and the world, and from all sorrows of every kind: And none of their works of faith, love and patience, shall be lost, or forgotten; but they shall all follow them to bear witness to them, as true believers who die in the Lord, that they may receive the blessed fruit of them in a proportionate reward of grace, at the great day of account, (see Rom. viii. 17. and 2 Cor. iv. 17.); though they do not go before them, in a way of plea or merit, to entitle them to eternal life.

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

14 After this, I looked again for some further revelation; and, observe the following vision, I saw an illustrious bright cloud; and upon this cloud the Lord Jesus, the Messiah himself, who was truly man, and often styled *the Son of man*, appeared, in like manner as he did in *Daniel's* vision, (chap. vii. 13.); he also appeared with rays of glory upon his head, which may be called a crown of gold to signify his royal dominion, as Lord of all; (Dan. vii. 14.) and with the figure of a sharp sickle in his hand, such as husbandmen use in reaping corn; an emblem of his coming forth in righteousness to cut down his antichristian enemies †.

15 I

## N O T E S.

\* I rather think that "the dead who die in the Lord," relates to all true believers that have a saving interest in Christ, than merely to martyrs for his sake: For this best agrees with the meaning of like phrases in 1 Cor. xv. 18. and 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16; and a declaration of the blessedness of all such is more extensively useful and encouraging to the whole church, under her various tribulations, in the present state of sin and sorrow. And though the participle (*ἀναπαύσονται*) rendered *from their labours* is differently rendered by critics to

either what goes before, or to what follows after it, there may be no great difference in the sense as given in the paraphrase.

† Some are of opinion, that in this vision the sickle, reaping, and harvest, are to be taken in a good sense, as they often are in Scripture; and that they here refer to Christ's reaping the fruits of the gospel-ministry, and gathering a great multitude of souls into his kingdom, at the time of the Reformation; or to his gathering the whole church to himself at the end of the world.—

Bar.



15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth: and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

15 I also beheld another angel coming forth from the church-triumphant in heaven, which is eminently the temple of God where he most gloriously dwells; and this angel, as delivering the order which he brought from God in the heavenly temple, earnestly called upon the Lord Jesus, who sat on the bright cloud, saying, Execute righteous vengeance on evil doers, without delay, which was emblematically expressed by immediately thrusting his sickle among them and reaping them down: For it is high time, according to their provocations and to divine appointment, that thou shouldst cut them off; for the wicked inhabitants of the earth are become as ripe for destruction as the corn is to be cut down at the harvest, like what was said of ancient *Babylon*, (Jer. li. 33.)

16 Accordingly, the set time for this stroke upon antichristian powers being come, the Son of man, who appeared as sitting upon the cloud, (ver. 14.) immediately began to execute judgments on that wicked generation; and multitudes of them were as effectually-cut down as corn is with a sickle in harvest; which may point at the great blow he gave to the beast, when several nations fell off from, and made head against Popery at the time of the *Reformation*, which was a great loss and terror to the antichristian party, and the occasion of bloody wars, by which many of them were slain; and the Lord did judgment upon their graven images, as he did upon those of ancient *Babylon*, (Jer. li. 47, 52.)

17 And as Christ has all instruments at his command to execute his wrath; so I afterwards saw another angel come forth from the immediate presence of God in the heavenly temple, with the like emblem of a sharp sickle in his hand, to signify that he was to be employed for further executions of wrath, in subordination to, and by the command and power of Christ.

18 Here-

#### N O T E.

But as these expressions and those in the next vision, manifestly allude, at least, to Joel iii. 13. where they signify the judgments of God for the great wickedness of the people; and as the sharp sickle in the hand of the angel that appeared in the next vision, ver. 17. was an emblem of execution, it seems most proper to interpret the same emblem in the same way in both these visions, whether we refer the first to the stroke upon Antichrist, at the *Reformation*, which was a great distress upon her, and diminution of her subjects and power, or to any other position of her before her downfall; and refer the

second to her utter destruction at the close of her appointed period, or to the final judgment of all the wicked. But as the vintage is after harvest, and is represented (ver. 18, &c.) in more terrible language of destruction than the harvest, I am inclined to consider the harvest as emblematical of the stroke given to popery at the *Reformation*; and the vintage of that which shall come with the second vengeance hereafter to the utter extinction of that antichristian power. And the general design here given of this total overthrow is drawn out more particularly, and enlarged, in the 19. and 20. chapters.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

18 Hereupon methought another angel came forth from the altar of burnt-offering, the fire of which, to consume the sacrifices, was an emblem of divine justice, which this angel had authority (*ἐξουσίαν*) to denounce; and he, according to his commission, called aloud with great earnestness to the angel, who appeared with the emblem of a sharp sickle, in token of his being armed for vengeance, (*ver. 17.*) saying, Go on to execute further judgments in the slaughter of the antichristian party, the measure of whose iniquity is now full, and of whom it may be justly said, as it was of idolatrous *Israel*, *Their vine is of the vine of Sodom; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitterness*, (*Deut. xxxii. 32.*) Cut them off, as the clusters of grapes are cut off from a vine with a sharp book, at the time of vintage; for they have fitted themselves for just destruction, as grapes are in fit case to be pressed when they are thoroughly ripe.

19 Immediately upon this, methought, I saw the forementioned angel (*ver. 17.*) cut down the apostate church, which may well be stiled the degenerate vine of the earth, as with a sharp crooked knife; and gathering them together, delivered them up to be punished by the most dreadful executions of divine wrath, which would press them with as sore and heavy calamities as are figuratively represented in the writings of the prophets, by the trading of grapes in a wine-press. (*Isa. lxiii. 3, 4. and Lam. i. 15.*) And this appeared, in my vision, as a very great wine-press, on account of the vast multitude that Christ will then tread down in his anger and fury, (*Isa. lxiii. 3, 6.*)

20 And the destruction of the idolatrous persecuting enemies of Christ, that were without the pale of his true church, and shall be excluded from the heavenly city, (*chap. xxii. 15.*) and cast into outer darkness, was so exceeding great and extensive, as signified by the treading of a large wine-press, which is wont to be done without the city, that in allusion to the greatest slaughter in a field of battle, and to the juice of grapes, which, being squeezed out, is called *the blood of grapes*, (*Gen. xlix. 11.\**) their blood seemed to flow, like prodigious

#### N O T E.

\* Mr Joseph Mede observes, that it is not said that the angel, which cast the grapes into the wine-press trod them: but this was done by Christ himself, who is represented as the King coming forth from heaven, with a celestial army of horsemen to destroy

them: (*Vid. Bibliand in loc.*) And says in his *Remains*, (*l. 3. chap. vii. p. 136 of his works*), "supposing this vintage to be yet to come, I am much inclined to think, that this 1600 furlongs without the city should be a designation of Peter's patrimony; or the

deceitful

gious quantities of liquor from a huge wine-press, in such a torrent, as might be figured out by its rising and swelling as high as the bridles of war-horses, to the destruction of them and their riders; and spreading through all the *Pope's* patrimony, the length of which may be computed at sixteen hundred furlongs.

### RECOLLECTIONS.

How delightful is a view of Christ as the Lamb on mount *Sion* among his people, and of their singing with inimitable strains of melody, the praises of redeeming love! These have distinguishing marks of the children of God, that own and honour him, and are owned and honoured by him: These are they that were redeemed from among the rest of mankind on earth: They are pure from the superstitious and idolatrous worship of the *Papists*; and follow the lamb wheresoever he goes, and are a kind of first-fruits consecrated to him and his Father, they are sincere in their profession of his name, and are preeminently holy, and without blame in love, and free from guilt and condemnation, through faith in the righteousness of Christ: In these, patience shall have its perfect work; and they will conscientiously obey the commandments of God, and maintain the uncorrupted doctrines of Christ, with a humble trust in him for all salvation; and these shall be blessed from the time of their death, and for ever afterwards, as has been declared by an immediate voice from heaven, and by the infallible spirit of prophecy. How thankful should we be, that after a long night of popish darkness, the everlasting gospel was preached in its purity, and with great success, at the Reformation! What a blessing is this to the church of Christ! and what a humbling and vexatious stroke upon antichrist, and sure presage of her utter downfall! This shall be as certainly accomplished in God's appointed time, as it is now foretold. And, Ah! how dreadful will the portion of their cup be, who have drank of the wine of her fornication, by joining in her idolatrous worship! They shall drink of the cup of God's wrath, without mixture; and their torment shall be incessant for ever and ever. The Lord Jesus who appeared on a bright cloud with a glorious crown, will espouse the cause of his church and people, and come forth in righteousness against their antichristian-enemies, by gradual dispensations of providence, in which he will cut them down, as with a sickle in harvest; till at length he will make a full end of them, as the grapes of a vintage are cut off, and cast into and trodden in a wine-press, till all their juice is squeezed out. Thus shall it be done in God's fit time to the idolatrous and tyrannical church of *Rome*; and the slaughter of them will be great and terrible beyond expression. How should we rejoice in faith and hope of the glorious, though awful manifestation, that will then be made of God's righteous judgments, to open a way for the prosperous and happy state of the church which shall succeed it.

### C H A P. XV.

*A vision of seven angels, having the seven last plagues, follows, by way of solemn preface to the execution of them, as to be made upon the beast.*

#### N O T E.

demefns of the church, which, in the longest extent thereof, from the walls of *Rome* to the river *Po*, is exactly 1000 furlongs, or 100 Italian miles; whereby it is probable that the *Pope's* own territories, *Stato della Chiesa*, may prove the cockpit of this execution, whither Christ, as into a wine-press, will from all parts gather the bloody grapes, when he means to tread them." However,

as the execution here pointed at, seems yet to come, it probably will be at the close of the period set out in prophecy, for the reign of the beast. And though we may not be able to determine the exact time and circumstances of it, it will assuredly be brought to pass, in God's appointed time, as the harvest and vintage occur in their appointed seasons.

beast; and a song of praise is sung by the church, which obtained victory over him, 1,—4. Then the temple in heaven is opened, from whence the seven angels come out with the seven plagues; and to them one of the living creatures gives seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that they might be ready to pour them out in their order: Upon which, the temple was filled with an inaccessible cloud of glory, 5,—8.

## TEXT.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

## PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions, which gave me a general view of the judgments that should come upon the antichristian-beast, I had another, which was preparatory to the execution of the judgments themselves, that in their order were to begin, carry on, and complete his ruin. To this purpose I beheld a very remarkable and amazing appearance in heaven of seven angels, as ministers of divine vengeance, who had a commission to execute the seven last severe strokes that were to fall upon antichrist, in their course, till he should be utterly destroyed: For all the wrath, which God had righteously determined against this idolatrous and persecuting power, was contained in these executions to make a full end of it, together with all the enemies of Christ and his church.

2 I furthermore saw, as in a former vision, (*chap. iv. 6.*) a representation of a large vessel, like the molten sea, in *Solomon's temple*, (*1 Kings vii. 23.*) which shone with a brightness as white and clear as crystal, mixt with a beautiful colour, as red as fire †; Which may be considered as an emblem of the spotless purity and efficacy of the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ, whereby he appeased the fiery resentments of divine justice: And, as to the glorious company which, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, had bravely resisted, and by their doctrine, example, and patent sufferings

## NOTE.

† Among the numerous conjectures about the meaning of "the sea of glass," it seems to me that all those are to be discarded, which refer to the state of the church on earth; the scene of this vision being in heaven, ver. 1. as it also had been in the former vision of the sea of glass, where the four living creatures, or representatives of the ministers of the church, appeared, (*chap. iv. 6.* see the note there.) And among the interpretations, which consider it as in heaven, that given in the paraphrase, I am ready to think, may be as probable as any other, since these victorious and triumphant saints are represented as "standing on the sea of glass;" and so may direct our

thoughts to the foundation on which they stand with joy and praise, rather than to their own purity, love, and zeal, or any other excellent graces shined in them, or exercised by them. And as the following paraphrase on this chapter, proceeds upon the supposition, which I think the spirit of prophecy determines, that heaven is the scene of this vision, it need not be wondered at, that it is different from the fancies of most expounders, who place the scene in the church on earth; or that I take no further notice of their explications, while I all along give what seems to me the most probable that has offered to my thoughts upon the plan of this scene's being in heaven.

serings even unto death, had overcome all temptations to comply with the authority of antichrist, and to make an open profession of his idolatrous religion, which may be signified by their getting the victory over the beast, and his image and mark, and the number of his name; These appeared as standing with confidence and triumph on the sea of glass, as the foundation on which they stand with complet acceptance in the divine presence; and they seemed to have harps in their hands, in allusion to those musical instruments that were used in the temple-service for celebrating the praises of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!

3 And, metbought, they joined in concert, as a chorus, to sing the wonders of Divine Providence in a triumphant song for deliverance out of the hands of their persecuting enemies, like that which was composed by *Moses* the servant of the Lord, and was sung by *Israel* for their deliverance from the *Egyptians* at the Red-sea: (*Exod* xv. 1, &c.) And to this they added a song of thanksgiving and praise to the honour of Christ, the Lamb of God, for the much greater salvation brought in by him; a song, which he put into their mouths, saying, in an ascription of glory first to God the Father\*, Great and wonderful are thy works of providence in ways of judgment and mercy, O Lord Jehovah, the almighty God, whose uncontrollable power performs them; and then to the glorified Lamb, saying, Thou art just and righteous in all thy proceedings against thine enemies, as rendering to them according to their deserts; and thou art true in executing thy threatnings upon them, and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people, O thou King of the church, which consists of holy ones, whom *thou hast redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to thyself*, (*Tit* ii. 14.)

2 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and

4 Who, that knows thy name, O Lord, will not reverence, worship and put his trust in thee, and ascribe all glory to thee, who art infinitely worthy of it? (*Pf* lxxxix. 7.) For, in opposition to antichrist's vainly assuming to himself the title of *his Holiness*, thou only art

#### N O T E.

\* Though Christ in his divine nature is truly "the Lord God Almighty," and characters equivalent to this are else here ascribed to him: (see the notes on chap. i. 4, 8. and Dr Waterland's sermons at the Lady Moyer's lecture, p. 230, &c.) Yet it appears to me that God the Father, or God essentially considered, inclusive of the three divine persons, is here most immediately spoken of under this title; and that Christ in his office-capacity, is meant by King of saints, to

whom glory is ascribed together with the Father: For the former part of this song seems to relate to the song of *Moses*; and the latter to the song of the Lamb. And the title, King of saints, is with the greatest propriety given to Christ, who in his regal office is, by way of peculiarity, King of Zion, and King of the church; and the following part of this song is evidently, though not strictly, applicable to him.

and worship be-  
fore thee; for thy  
judgments are  
made manifest.

art fit to wear it, as thou art originally, essentially and communicatively pure and holy. We believe, and rejoice in the thought, that the time is coming, when thou wilt be more abundantly feared and glorified on earth, than hitherto: For all nations of the world shall come as a willing people unto thee, and own and honour thee, and pay their solemn adorations to thee, as in thy special presence, and under thine eye, in the assemblies of the saints; for the judgments, which thou wilt execute upon thine antichristian enemies, are manifest tokens of thy taking the part of thy people against them, to the conviction of all that duly observe the awful operations of thy hand.

5 And after that, I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

5 At the conclusion of this praising song, I had a further vision, which led on to the scene of judgments that were to be executed in their order; and as the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple; and the ark of the testimony, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim between which the Lord dwelt, (*Exod. xxv. 22. and Ps. lxxx. 1.*) were seen when the high priest entered into the most holy place; so, methought, I saw an opening in heaven, which gave me a view of God's most eminently glorious throne, and of all the symbols of his favour to his true worshippers, to intimate that, as inquiries were wont to be answered from the oracle, (*2 Sam. xvi. 23.*) so God was now about to answer the prayers of the church for delivering them from the power of their antichristian enemies.

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

6 Whereupon, I beheld seven angels, the appointed ministers of God's wrath and justice, coming out of the most holy place, even heaven itself, as having received his orders with respect to the seven judgments, that were to be successively executed upon the beast: These angels, to signify the sanctity of their character and ministrations, appeared as arrayed in an awful and splendid manner with holy garments of pure and white linen, and golden girdles about their breasts, such as the high priests used to wear, (*Exod. xxviii. 4,—8. and Lev. xvi. 23.*) when they went into the holy of holies, and came out from thence to bring the answers of God to the prayers of his people, which they had received from the oracle,

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God,

7 And one of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers, (see the note on *chap. iv. 6.*) who were most nearly concerned for the welfare of the church, was employed, by divine commission, to deliver to the seven angels, to each of them one of the seven golden

God, who liveth  
for ever and ever.

golden cups or vials \*, which were filled with mortal ingredients, as symbols of the wrath of God, which they were to be instruments of pouring out upon the idolatrous persecuting beast, at his order, and by the activity of his own power, who is from everlasting to everlasting God, and lives for ever to execute his righteous judgments in their course, till all his enemies be utterly destroyed.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

8 And when they had received their commission, I saw the heavenly temple filled with a cloud of glory, resembling that which formerly filled the tabernacle: This cloud appeared like a thick smoke awfully glorious, which was a symbol of divine vengeance, (*Pf. xviii. 8.*) as going forth from the presence of the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, and the murmuring *Israelites*, (*Numb. xvi. 19, 42.*): And as *Moses* could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple, while the *glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord*, (*Exod. xl. 35. and 1 Kings. viii. 11.*); so no one was able to enter into this heavenly temple to intreat for the preventing of these grievous calamities upon the beast: none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have its free course, till all the seven punishments, to be inflicted by the ministry of the seven angels, were fully executed in their order.

#### R E C O L L E C T I O N S.

How glorious are the triumphs of the saints, who stand in the immediate presence of God, with all acceptance on the foot of the atoning righteousness of Christ; and who, through faith in his blood, have got the victory over all their enemies! And how sweetly do they sing of mercy and of judgment; of the wondrous works of providence and grace, which are just and true, to the glory of the Lord God Almighty, and of the Lamb, their sovereign Lord and King! How worthy is he to be revered, served and glorified! All the beauties of holiness, and of every other divine perfection, shine in him; and the time is coming, when all nations of the earth shall worship him, and his judgments shall be fully manifested in the destruction of the antichristian-beast. The decree is gone forth against him: the seven angels have their commission to pour out their seven vials, which are filled with the wrath of God, to be executed in due course upon him; and no intercessions shall be admitted, to prevent the progress of these judgments, till they be fulfilled in the utter destruction of all popish powers, and every other enemy. What a support and encouragement to the church of Christ is the belief and assured prospect of this, as given by the spirit of prophecy, for their comfort under all their present tribulations!

#### C H A P.

#### N O T E.

\* A vial was a cup, or wide-mouthed vessel to drink out of; and as a cup figuratively signifies sufferings and afflictions, *Pf. xl. 6. and Matth. xxvi. 39.* and we often read of a "cup of the Lord's fury, and a cup of trembling." *Is. li. 17, 22. Jer.*

*xxv. 15. and Zech. xii. 2.* so these seven vials or cups are said to be "full of the wrath of God," which was to be poured out upon, and drank by the antichristian-beast, and all the enemies of the church. (*See also ch. xiv. 10.*)

## C H A P. XVI.

*The seven angels are ordered to pour out their seven vials of the wrath of God on the antichristian-beast and all its supports. 1. The first vial is poured out on the earth with grievous sores, signifying great troubles through the Romish community, between the year 830 and 988. 2. The second on the sea, which is turned into blood, signifying a great effusion of blood in the holy wars, between the year 1040 and 1190. 3. The third on the rivers and fountains, which became blood, signifying civil wars in the papacy, between the year 1200 and 1371. 4,—7. The fourth on the sun, which scorched men, signifying wars through the contentions of Popes for the papal chair, and the destruction of the eastern empire, between the year 1378 and 1530. 8, 9. The fifth on the seat of the beast, signifying the establishment of the Protestant Reformation, which was a great shock to Popery, between the year 1530 and 1650. 10, 11. The sixth on the great river Euphrates, signifying some terrible invasion of the Pope's dominion, from its eastern borders, which seems, in order of time, to be yet to come. 12,—16. And the seventh on the air, the seat of Satan's power, which shall issue in the total destruction of all antichristian enemies, 17,—21.*

## TEXT.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

## PARAPHRASE.

THE seven angels, having received their respective vials or cups of the wrath of God; (*chap. xv. 7.*) see the note there,) and so being ready to pour them out in their order, whenever he should give the word of command; I thereupon heard an exceeding loud, awful, and authoritative voice, proceeding from the heavenly temple, (*ver. 17.*) whereby, in allusion to God's ancient way of manifesting his will from the oracle, he issued out his commission, saying to them, Go forth according to my appointment, and pour out the cups successively\*, that are full of the righteous wrath of God upon the wicked inhabitants, and particularly the antichristian enemies, on the face of the earth; a general view of which had been given me in several foregoing visions.

2 And the first went

VIAL I.] 2. And, in obedience to this command, the

## NOTE.

\* There is a remarkable similitude between the four first vials or cups of God's wrath, under the seventh trumpet, which relate to the judgments that led the way to, and should issue in the ruin of Antichrist; and the four first trumpets, under the seventh seal, (*chap. viii.*) which relate to the destruction of the Roman empire, and made

way for the rise of Antichrist. They are represented in both, as falling upon "the earth, the sea, the rivers, and fountains," "of waters, and the sun," and that in the same order; which may intimate that the steps of her fall shall be answerable to those of her rise.



went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

the first angel went forth, and poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the earth*; which may signify people of various countries, and chiefly of the inland parts of the antichristian-territories: And thereupon, methought, the most loathsome and painful boils and ulcers like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. ix. 9,—11.) broke out upon, and tormented this spiritual *Egypt*, in various miseries which beset them, even the subjects of the papacy, that had complied with the authority and corruptions of the antichristian-beast, and made an open profession of the idolatrous worship that he had set up, (*chap. xiii. 15.* see the note there); \* which may be considered, as referring to the general corruption of faith, worship, and manners, and the sore distresses, in body and mind, of the professors of this apostate church, when dreadful devastation was made upon them, as occasioned by the contentions and quarrels which arose between popish princes after the death of *Lewis* surnamed the *Pious*, and continued for a long time, between the year *one thousand and thirty, and nine hundred eighty-eight.*

3 And the second angel pour-

VIAL II.] 3 And the second angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the sea*; which may signify many

# NOTE

\* As the first of these vials, and consequently all that follow, is expressly said to be poured out upon the men that had "the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image," we must, I think, conclude, that the judgments, intended by them, are such as were to be executed upon the antichristian church, during the period of 1260 years, after the Pope had obtained his temporal power. And though, among the many different constructions about their accomplishment, it does not become us to be positive in either of them; yet Mr Lowman's pleases me best, as it preserves the series, as far as they have hitherto appeared by historical facts, in a most regular order.—"Wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores; wounds that stink, and are corrupt, and loathsome diseases," are striking figures of a corrupt and miserable condition, Isa. i. 5, 6. and Ps. xxviii. 3, 7. Accordingly, the "noisome and grievous sores" are a fit emblem to represent a corrupt and calamitous state of the worshippers of the beast; and this the but now mentioned learned writer thinks may relate to "all sorts of corruptions that gained ground, and prevailed in the Romish church and state, which brought a painful sore, and was in great measure the cause of those many evils that for a long time afflicted the inhabitants of the earth, during the quarrels and contests between the

successors of Charles the Great, and were an occasion of many other calamities that greatly weakened the Western Empire by the Normans (who were Heathens) invading and ravaging several parts of it, especially in France; by the Saracens ravaging Italy; and the Hungarians, then a barbarous and brutal people, breaking in upon the German dominions; which was the calamitous state of the Western Empire, for above 100 years from the death of Lewis the Pious, A. D. 480, to the settlement of the German empire in Otto the Great, A. D. 961; and well agrees to the prophetic description, and to the time and order of the prophecies, with respect to each other." The historical facts correspondent hereunto, and to the four following vials, are supported by the authority of writers of the greatest credit, as he has quoted them at large, which, as far as I have had opportunity of examining them, appear to be faithfully represented—I readily agree with this, and some other judicious expositors, that whether we can be certain as to the precise times and contents of each particular judgment, signified by the several vials in their order, or not there is a general use to be made of the more general meaning, if we were to understand no more of it, for the encouragement of faith and patience, and for warning us against falling in with the great apostasy of this period.

ed out his vial upon the sea: and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

many people of the *Romish* empire, (*chap. xvii. 15.*) that dwelt upon the borders, or islands of, and trafficked upon the sea: And as the waters of *Nile*, in another plague of *Egypt*, were turned into blood, and the fishes in that great river died, (*Exod. vii. 17, 18.*) so every one in those parts, who owned, and lived in subjection to the popish power, was in danger of being mortally wounded, and of his blood being congealed, like that of a dead man; thereby intimating, that vast multitudes would perish in the wars, that would mostly be carried on by sea; which may be considered as referring to the wars that ensued upon the Pope's claiming a power of excommunicating and deposing emperors, and to the holy wars, that he set on foot for recovering *Jerusalem*, and the sepulchre of our Lord and the holy land, from the *Saracens*, who had taken possession of it; in which wars many hundred thousands of papists lost their lives: All which came to pass between the year *one thousand and forty, and eleven hundred and ninety.*

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

VIAL. III.] 4 And the *third* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on the rivers and fountains of waters; which may also signify a multitude of people in some principal countries of the popedom; and thereupon, as the streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, as well as the great river *Nile*, in the forementioned plague of *Egypt*, became blood, (*Exod. vii. 19,—21.*) so it was intimated, that these countries should be filled with blood; which may be considered as referring to the dreadful civil wars between the *Guelphs* and *Gibellines*, and between popes and emperors, that continued for above a hundred years, and occasioned vast effusions of the blood of the inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages in most parts of *Italy*, between the year *twelve hundred, and thirteen hundred seventy-one*, which cut off abundance of the pope's dependents, and was a great diminution of his power.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be; because thou hast judged thus.

5 And no sooner had this angel executed his commission for pouring out his vial of divine wrath upon the countries, signified by the rivers and fountains of waters to turn them into blood, than I heard him say, with a voice of solemn adoration and praise, Just and righteous are these awful dispensations of thy providence, O Lord, who in thy being and perfections, counsels and appointments, art, and ever wast, and wilt be from everlasting to everlasting unchangeably the same: Thy ways of judgment ever have been, are, and will be all righteous; and thou must, and shalt be justified in

in them, and particularly in the judgment now denounced; because, in this way of retribution, thou hast justly retaliated upon this persecuting blood-thirsty people the very same sort of punishment as they had wickedly inflicted upon thy church.

6 For they have  
sued the blood of  
saints and prop-  
hets, and thou  
hast given them  
blood to drink;  
for they are  
worthy.

6 For they have, in a most cruel manner, imbrued their hands in the blood of thy holy people and ministering servants, that have suffered martyrdom, and therein bore an honourable testimony to thee and thy cause, and sealed it with their blood; Which may be considered as referring to the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, great numbers of which had been lately persecuted unto death at the instigation of Pope *Innocent* the third\*; who also set up a bloody court of *Inquisition*, about the year *twelve hundred and twelve*: And therefore thou hast given them a cup of wrath to drink, by sending the sword among them, that they may be drunken with their own blood, (*Isa. xlix. 26.*); and hast thereby rewarded their iniquity upon their own heads; for by their murderous cruelties they have highly deserved it.

7 And I heard  
another out of  
the altar say, Even  
so. Lord God  
Almighty, true  
and righteous are  
thy judgments.

7 And the equity of this divine procedure was so evident and affecting, that, methought, I immediately heard the voice of another angel, who, as it were, personated the souls under the altar, that had been long ago slain by *Rome-Pagan*, (*chap. vi. 9.*) echoing back to, and joining in this solemn applause, to signify the consent and approbation of the whole church, saying, *Amen*, I heartily concur with this ascription of glory to thy righteousness in this way of thy judgments, O Almighty *Jehovah*, who hast made known thy great power herein: Thou art true in fulfilling thy threatnings of thine enemies, and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people; and art undeniably and gloriously just in inflicting this deserved punishment on such a blood-thirsty generation; as thou also art in all the judgments, which thou hast begun to execute, and wilt further

# N O T E.

\* The *Waldenses* were so called from *Waldo*, a citizen of *Lyons* in France; and the *Albigenses* took their name from *Albi*, another city of France in the upper *Languedoc*, where they first appeared; and their opinions were mostly the same with those of the *Waldenses*, who declared against the authority of the Pope, and many corruptions of the *Romish* church; such as *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, praying for the dead, and worshipping of saints. These toward the beginning of the 13th century were persecuted under the influence of Pope *Innocent III.* who erected a Court of *Inquisition* for

extirpating heretics, as they were called: In order to which he appointed commissaries to inquire after them. They that were suspected of heresy were examined by torture; and the accused were not allowed the privilege of defending themselves, or making any appeal. At first they were punished with imprisonment; after-ward were put to death by the sword, and most commonly, at length, by burning: And in the year 1212 say some, or 1216 say others, he made *Dominicus*, a Spaniard, inquisitor-general. (*Vid. Spanh. Eccles. Hist. p. 1659, &c.*)

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

further carry on, till thou shalt utterly destroy the *Antichristian*, as thou hast the *Pagan* persecutors.

VIAL IV.) 8 And the *fourth* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on the *sun*; which, being the chief of the heavenly bodies, is a fit emblem of the supreme power or headship over the church, which is claimed by the Pope, as *Jacob*, the father of the family, was signified by *the sun* in *Joseph's* prophetic dream: (*Gen.* xxxvii. 9, 10.) And the angel had a commission, by means of this judgment, to bring tormenting distresses on the wicked men of the earth, as extreme and destructive as are produced by the most violent burning heat of the sun, when it smites the earth, and its fruits and inhabitants, as with fire in a hot and sultry day, without any shade to screen them from it. (See *Pf.* cxxi. 5, 6.)

9 Accordingly the Popes themselves, together with the subjects of the papacy, were as sorely afflicted in body and mind, as by the parching and noxious heat of the sun, when it shines in full strength, and burns up all before it; which may be considered as referring to the terrible calamities that arose from various causes, and particularly from the ambitious intrigues and furious wars that were carried on between several Popes for the papal chair, between the year *thirteen hundred seventy-eight* and *fifteen hundred and thirty*†. And under all these piercing calamities, they who suffered

#### N O T E.

† There were many warm contests between Urban and Clement VII.; and afterwards between Eugene IV. and Felix, besides other intermediate competitors for the Papedom, which they severally claimed at the same time. This occasioned excommunications one of another, and violent persecutions and wars, that were severely distressing to themselves, and to their respective adherents, during the schism, which, having lasted for above 50 years, ended about A. D. 1447. Here may also be a further reference to the schism between the Greek and Latin churches, and the wars between the Christians of the Eastern and Western Empire, which remarkably weakened both, and gave the Turks an advantage, which assisted in their taking Constantinople about A. D. 1453, and putting an end to the Eastern Empire. Others still further take in the consideration of a pestilential distemper, which spread like fire in Germany about A. D. 1519, and had infected England in a festering sickness some years before. All which events were between the year 1378 and 1530. Within this period was the

Council of Constance, which about A. D. 1414, condemned John Huss, and afterwards Jerome of Prague, to be burnt to death for opposing the Pope; and they were accordingly executed, contrary to the most solemn promises of safe passports, under pretence that "no faith is to be kept with heretics." (See, for these facts, the authorities quoted in Mr Lowman's history of them.)—Some have included these villainous executions in "the scorching heat of the sun. But as all the judgments, signified by the vials, were to fall on the papal party, I can scarce think that this vial related to the death of those noble witnesses against the corruptions of Rome; though, probably, it might to the vexation which their brave testimony to the death gave their adversaries, and to the Bohemian war that was occasioned by this decree of the Council of Constance, and the execution of it, which cost great numbers of Papists their lives. And their going into these violent measures, while the hand of God lay so heavy upon them, may, perhaps, be pointed at, by "their not repenting, to give him glory."

suffered by them were enraged at them ; and, like a wicked people of old, *fretted themselves, and cursed their God*, (Isa. viii. 21.) quarrelling with, and reproaching his providence, who had power to inflict, or remove these punishments : And they hardened themselves in their cruel and idolatrous practices, and evil ways, and obstinately refused to give glory to him, by acknowledging the justice of his dealings with them, and by confessing their iniquities, and accepting the punishment of them, or forsaking them, but still persisted in them ; which may be supposed to refer to their barbarous and perfidious persecutions of *John Huss*, and *Jerome of Prague*, notwithstanding all the judgments which they themselves were groaning under.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

VIAL V.] 10 And, next in order, the *fifth* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the throne* (*power*) of the antichristian beast, the emblem of his power ; which in prophetic stile is signified by a *throne* ; (2 Sam. iii. 10. and vii. 16. and 1 Kings i. 37, 47.) And may be considered as referring to the great shock that was given to the authority and dominion of the Pope, by the glorious *Protestant Reformation*, when, between the year *fifteen hundred and thirty*, and *sixteen hundred and fifty*, it was completely established, and many nations fell off from him, and turned their arms against him ; and others retrenched their obedience to his authority ; which was a great eclipse of his glory and diminution of his power, and a sore vexation to his Spirit, and to the subjects of his kingdom, which, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. x. 21,—23.) was full of hideous darkness, the emblem of disconsolate sorrow and affliction, (Isa. v. 30. and ix. 1.) and was so distressing to them, that they raged like persons, who bite their tongues for madness and extremity of anguish.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

11 And instead of being reclaimed by these troubles from their superstition, idolatry, and persecutions, they continued inveterate enemies to Christ and the gospel ; and, in effect, spoke opprobriously of the great Lord of heaven and earth, on account of his bringing many painful anxieties and sore rebukes upon them, though it were for their iniquities ; Which may be considered as pointing at their reviling the first reformers, and their adherents, as *Schismatics*, *Heretics* and *Apostates*, and inveighing against their separation, and the means used to support it, though apparently under the conduct of the God of heaven, as unlawful, damnable, and rebellious : And so blind and hardened were their hearts, that

that they would take no conviction of the evil of their doings, as the procuring cause of all the punishments that befel them; which might refer to the council of *Trent*, that, notwithstanding all the light of the Reformation, established the whole system of their corrupt doctrines and idolatrous worship; the council beginning in the year of our Lord 1545, and ending in the year 1563.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

VIAL VI.] 12 And the sixth angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon the great river *Euphrates*, which, literally taken, was the eastern part of the *Roman* empire, and the barrier of the *Affyrian* and *Babylonian* empires; and so was a proper emblem of the eastern boundaries of the papal kingdom: And by the pouring out of this vial the barrier was destroyed, that had prevented invasions from those quarters upon the popedom; which, in allusion to the draining of *Euphrates* by *Cyrus*, when he took *Babylon*, (*Isa.* xlv. 27, 28. *Jer.* L. 38. and li. 36, 37.) \* may be signified by the drying up of the waters of the great river *Euphrates*, that a passage might be opened for the *Turks*, or some princes of eastern countries, to invade mystical *Babylon*; and may be supposed to relate to some powerful invasion of the kingdom of the papacy by that people, as a future judgment, which is not yet executed upon it; but is still to come, as the next is that shall follow it; and is to be prayed and waited for with faith and patience, and to be explained by events, which shall as certainly be brought to pass, in God's time, to fulfil these parts of the prophecy, as any of the foregoing have been, and as all the rest shall be, in their order.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits

13 And I further saw, in my vision of what would come to pass under this *vial*, a figurative representation of three impure spirits, which, in allusion to another plague of *Egypt*, (*Exod.* viii. 3,—6.) were as filthy and

#### N O T E.

\* See Dean Pridaux's account at large of the draining of the river *Euphrates* by *Cyrus* at his taking *Babylon*. (*Connect.* part I. book 2. p. 121, &c. edit. 4th.)—There are indeed several other interpretations of this vial than that supposed in the paraphrase, which may be seen in many expositors. Some refer it to the conversion of the Jews, as signified by "the kings of the east," in order to which the Turkish empire is to be weakened: Others think that some newly-converted princes of the East will pass *Euphrates* to join with the true church of Christ: Others understand it as relating to the ruin of the Turkish empire, or Eastern-Antichrist: Others, to the removal of ob-

stacles, such as the terror of the bulls, edicts, and censures of Rome, that had before prevented the princes of Europe from invading the Pope's dominions, but will no longer be a terror or bar to them, which these writers suppose may be signified by the figurative *Euphrates* being dried up: But I humbly apprehend that we want light sufficient to determine any thing particularly about such an obscure representation of this vial, till the providence of God shall turn the prophecy into a history, in the fulfilment of it, by some eminent judgment upon the papacy, greater than all that has preceded it.

as like frogs  
come out of the  
mouth of the dra-  
gon, and out of  
the mouth of the  
beast, and out of  
the mouth of the  
false prophet.

and loathsome as the frogs that crept into their bed-chambers, and crawled about on the earth and in the waters; and may be considered as an emblem of the activity, trouble, and mischief of these wicked spirits, which were represented as proceeding, one out of the mouth of the great dragon, the devil, (*chap. xii. 9.*); another out of the mouth of the antichristian beast, which has seven heads and ten horns with crowns upon them, (*chap. xiii. 1.*); and a third out of the mouth of the second representation of the antichristian beast, which appeared with two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon, (*chap. xiii. 11.*) which may also be fully filled the false prophet. (*Chap. xix. 20. and xx. 10.*) These united together in sending forth their emissaries, such as the Jesuits, Monks, and Friars, and secular clergy, to creep into the secret councils of princes, that they might corrupt them, as the frogs of Egypt crept into the chambers of the king, (*Exod. viii. 3.*) and to spread wicked principles and practices by their influence.

14 For they are  
the spirits of de-  
vils; working mi-  
racles, which go  
forth unto the  
kings of the  
earth, and of the  
whole world, to  
gather them to  
the battle of that  
great day of God  
Almighty.

14 For these ecclesiastics are of the very same spirit and temper with the infernal demons, who excite and influence them to make false pretences and appearances of working miracles, as the magicians of Egypt did, that by these *lying wonders*, and other crafty methods, they might deceive the princes of the earth, and particularly of the papal empire; and might stir up all the inhabitants of the world, whom they could draw into their interest, to engage them to join together as a formidable army, that should set themselves in battle-array against Christ and his church, in their last united and most vigorous opposition to the almighty God, who is infinitely stronger than all his enemies.

15 Behold, I  
come as a thief.  
Blessed is he that  
watcheth, and  
keepeth his gar-  
ments, lest he  
walk naked, and  
they see his  
shame.

15 As this will be a time of great trial to the church, The Lord Jesus said, Observe what I now declare beforehand, for their caution and comfort, I will come as suddenly, surprisingly and unexpectedly, as a thief in the night, to the destruction of my antichristian enemies, and the deliverance of my people from their power. Happy, and only happy is that man, who in a prepared waiting and looking for it, shall be found all along, and at that day, to be upon his watch, like one who by that means keeps his garments from the thief that would rob him of them; and to maintain his faith in me for righteousness unto eternal life, and his integrity and soundness in principles and manners, unspotted by the defiling doctrines and practices of popery; lest, at my coming to take vengeance on that party, he be exposed to disgrace and confusion, like the man who had

had not on a wedding-garment, (*Matth. xxii. 11, 12.*) and left, in the sight of numerous spectators, he have nothing to cover the shame of his nakedness.

16 And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

16 And it was still further represented to me, that, in this last struggle against the church, the devil, as working in and by wicked and seducing spirits, would muster all his forces together as in a field of battle, which, for the dreadful slaughter that would then be made of his armies, may be compared to that famous place, which, according to the signification of the Hebrew word *Armageddon*, is the mountain of *Megiddo*, (*מגידו*) in the tribe of *Manasseh*, (*Josh. xvii. 11.*); and may be called the *Mountain of destruction*, where *Sisera* was defeated, and his numerous host cut off by *Barak* with the edge of the sword, (*Judg. iv. 15, &c. and v. 19.*) and where king *Josiah*, for his imprudent rashness, was slain by *Pharaoh Neco*, king of *Egypt*; (*2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.*) on which account the greatest lamentations were proverbially expressed by mourning in the valley of *Megiddon*, (*Zech. xii. 11, 12.*)

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

VIAL VII.) 17 And upon this grand defeat of anti-christian powers, The seventh and last of the angels poured out his cup of divine wrath into the region of the air, which encompasses the whole earth, as an emblem of the vengeance that should be executed upon Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience; and upon all the demons, which are the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places: (*Eph. ii. 2. and vi. 12.*) And to shew that this would be the destruction of Satan's empire, and of all the enemies of the church with him, I heard a loud majestic voice, proceeding from the throne of God in his heavenly temple, saying, The great work is now accomplished; it, according to a former hint, that has been given of the mystery of God, as to be finished, (*chap. x. 7.*) is now brought to its issue; This last cup of divine wrath has completed the judgments which God had purposed to execute, unto the total overthrow and ruin of Satan and all his agents, that they may no longer pervert the doctrines of the gospel, or persecute Christ's faithful servants.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as

18 And as a further lively emblem of this, methought I heard and saw in the air, into which this last vial was poured, such tremendous and astonishing sounds, and cracks of thunder, and flashes of lightning, as though the whole frame of the aerial heavens were dissolving; and these were attended with such a terrible



as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.

terrible and universal earthquake, and of such mighty force, as was never felt since the earth was peopled; which may be proposed to represent such amazing convulsions and commotions in this world, as should make a thorough change in the whole system of its religious affairs, to the entire destruction of the dominion of the devil, together with all antichristian powers upon earth; and to the setting up of that glorious state of the church, in which, as has been hinted, (*chap. xi. 15.*) *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*; and will be a lively image of the heavenly state of perfect happiness, when God will make all things new. (*Chap. xxi. 5.*)

19 And the great city was divided into the three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

19 And the immediate effect of this amazing catastrophe, as represented in vision, was, that the great city of Rome, the head of the papal empire, and all under its jurisdiction, were terribly shattered, and divided into three parts, to be destroyed by three sorts of punishment, in allusion to the threatnings denounced against Jerusalem and the apostate Jews for their abominations, when God said, *A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them,* (*Ezek. v. 12.*) And, together with the capital city of the antichristian empire, the other cities under its dominion, and the cities of all nations that opposed Christ and his gospel, fell in the wide-spreading ruins: And the whole of that idolatrous and persecuting body, which is mystically called *Babylon*, (*chap. xvii. 5.*) and *Sodom*, and *Egypt*, (*Chap. xi. 8.*) and seemed to be forgotten of God, through his long-suffering and patience, was now remembered by him, to take vengeance upon her for all her wickedness, corruptions and oppressions, to make her drink the dregs of the cup of his fierce indignation, as filled up with the most deadly ingredients, without mixture of mercy, (*chap. xiv. 10.*) in the severe punishments that were inflicted upon her, by way of retaliation for her having made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. (*Chap. xvii. 2.*)

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

20 And as earthquakes sometimes swallow up islands, and overturn mountains, this punishment was represented to be so extensive, as to reach every place where antichristian enemies dwelt, that they might no longer be found, either on the islands or continents of the earth;

earth; and that the idols, which were wont to be worshipped upon mountains, might be utterly destroyed.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail: for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

21 And, to set forth the universal and total ruin of the devil's empire, there were not only representations of thunder, lightning and an earthquake, to destroy cities, towns, and villages, and to overthrow islands and mountains within its dominion; but wheresoever men fled, as in cases of earthquakes they use to do into the fields, to escape danger, there was no safety for them; but prodigious storms of hail, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (*Exod. ix. 22,—25.*) though inexpressibly more terrible than *that*, or than the storm of hail-stones which fell upon the *Amorites*, (*Josh. x. 11.*) or than any other before or after those, were showered down from heaven upon them, to crush and dash them to pieces: Every stone of which seemed to be of such an astonishing size, as if it were a talent in weight: And yet these obdurate impenitent wretches, instead of taking conviction of their iniquities, and saying, even so much as the hard-hearted *Pharaoh* did under the plague of hail, *the Lord is righteous, and we are wicked*, (*Exod. ix. 27.*) speak blasphemously against the providence of God therein, as if he had dealt unjustly by them: For their distress and anguish, by means of this last cup of his wrath, was intolerably tormenting to them, as will be found, in God's appointed time, for finishing their destruction. (*Chap. xviii.*)

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How manifestly righteous are the judgments of God, that should be executed, in due season, upon antichristian idolaters and persecutors, and all the wicked and ungodly of the earth! They act under the influence of unclean diabolical spirits, which deceive the nations, and set them as in battle-array against the Almighty; and, instead of being reformed by one and another judgment, they obstinately persist in their iniquitous courses, and blaspheme the name of God, as though he dealt unjustly in punishing them. But, how long soever he may bear with them, he has his set-time for calling their sins to remembrance, and pouring out the vials of his righteous wrath upon them. And; Ah! how dreadful are the calamities, which he sooner or later, will inflict upon them! They are as grievous and tormenting as the forest ulcers; as nauseous and mortal, as seas and rivers of blood; as distressing, as the most scorching heat of the sun, which, like fire, burns up all before it; as doleful, as the thickest darkness; as exposed to every invading misery, as a country that has no barrier for its defence; and as terrifying and overwhelming, as inexpressible tempests of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and the heaviest storms of hail, beyond all that ever was felt on the earth. In this manner shall the worshippers of the beast, and all antichristian enemies, drink of the wrath of God, till, at length, they, together with the whole kingdom and power of Satan, shall be utterly destroyed. And who must not say that they are worthy of all this, as a just return upon them for the blood of the saints, which they have shed: and for all their abominable idolatries, and other multiplied corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners? God will be applauded, as holy, righteous, and true, in these executions of wrath; and his church must say *Amen* to his judging thus concerning all, that oppressed and tyrannized

over them during the reign of the beast? With what sudden and unexpected surprise will this tremendous day of the Lord come, like a thief in the night! Blessed are they that shall then be found upon their watch, and appear with spotless robes of righteousness and honour before him.

## C H A P. XVII.

*One of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, explains the meaning of the former visions of the antichristian beast that was to reign 1260 years, and then to be destroyed, whom he describes under the figure of a great whore sitting on many waters, and on a scarlet beast, attired in purple and scarlet and other deckings, and bearing the name of Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, 1,—6. Interprets the mystery of the woman, and the beast that had seven heads, and ten horns, and of the many waters on which she sat, who is overcome by the Lamb, and brought to consign punishment by means of the ten kings that had supported her, 7,—18.*

## TEXT.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither: I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters;

## PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions, one of the seven angels, who were employed as ministers of justice to pour out the seven cups of divine wrath upon antichrist, came forth and communed in a familiar manner with me, as an angel of the Lord formerly did with the prophet Zechariah, (chap. i. 9, &c.) to explain who, and what were meant by the representations which had been made of her, saying to me, Come near, and I will give you an account of her sins, and of God's righteous proceedings in condemning and punishing her, who may fitly be compared to a great strumpet, that *says in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow*, (chap. xviii. 7.); and sits with magnificent pomp and power, ease, luxury, and allurements, on the surface of many waters, the emblem of her jurisdiction over many nations and people: The more particular meaning of which I shall soon set before you, (ver. 15,—18.)

1 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

2 The reason of her being called *the great whore* is, because, like a lewd woman; she has enticed the princes and governors of the Roman empire to commit idolatry with her, which is spiritual fornication, or adultery; and the carnally minded people of the earth, as well as their rulers, have been intoxicated with her wicked arts and allurements, such as her honours and preferments, external pomp of habits, processions, and worship, pretended miracles, dispensations and pardons, and other specious motives, to draw men into a compliance with her idolatrous principles and practices, as if they had been

been overcome with strong wine, or had been bewitched with love-potions, to inflame the vicious inclinations of her *paramours* or sweet-hearts.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit unto the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns.

3 The angel thereupon conducted me, not corporally, but in a vision of the spirit, into a place of solitude or retirement, that I might the better observe and contemplate the state of this antichristian-power, during its tyranny over the church in the wilderness, (*chap. xii. 6.*); and there I beheld the representation of a woman, or the great antichristian whore, (*ver. 1.*) as sitting upon a beast of scarlet-colour, in allusion to the scarlet robes which the *Roman* emperors wore in time of war, to denote her cruel persecutions, and her ascendancy over the civil powers of the empire, for supporting her authority and her sanguinary laws and executions. This papal government bore many inscriptions, which set forth the blasphemous titles of idolatry, infallibility, and supremacy, that it would assume, or be called and known by; and it had a monstrous appearance of seven heads and ten horns, according to the representation made of it in my former vision. (*Chap. xiii. 1.*)

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

4 And the lewd woman herself, meaning the ecclesiastical power of the Pope, that sat upon, and was supported by the civil power signified by the beast, was apparelled with gay and sumptuous raiment of purple and scarlet dye; which may be considered as a prophetic emblem of the Pope and his cardinals, who are stained with the blood of martyrs, and the colours of whose habits are purple and scarlet: And she was adorned with rich and glittering ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls, as emblems of her wealth, grandeur, and sovereignty; which may point to the imperial authority, and to the vast pomp of the *Romish* church, and the extravagant profusion of its treasures in adorning its temples, relics and images, to procure the veneration of carnal minds: She was also represented, like the ancient *Babylon*, (*Jer. li. 7.*) as having a golden cup in her hand to entice her devotees to drink of it; which, notwithstanding its fair tempting appearance, was filled with all manner of abominable errors and iniquities, and with the loathsome impurities of idolatry, or spiritual fornication and adultery in those that profess espousals to Christ; and may point at the delusive charms of popery in its gaudy shows, and bold pretences to miracles, pardons and indulgences, and to being the only true church, and the like, as lures to bring people into her bosom.

5 And upon her forehead was a name

5 And upon this strumpet's forehead was an inscription that bore her name, by which she may easily be known

same written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

known and distinguished from all others; a name importing her to be a MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (2 Thess. ii. 7.) for the depth, secrecy, and unsearchable methods of carrying on her wicked designs \*; and in a figurative or mystical sense BABYLON THE GREAT, meaning the apostate church of Rome; which may be so styled, as she pretends to be the catholic church, and resembles *Babylon* of old, in the large extent of her jurisdiction, and in idolatry, pride, luxury, and oppression: She is the MOTHER, the parent, ringleader, patroness, supporter and nourisher of both literal and spiritual adultery and fornication, and of all ABOMINABLE UNCLEANNESS, and every other sort of notorious crimes, which abound in the nations of the earth, that are under her dominion.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

6 And I further beheld this whorish woman to be filled, and glutted with the blood of those whom God had set apart for himself and sanctified by his Spirit, and of Christ's faithful witnesses, who sealed their testimony to him with their blood, which she shed on account of their open confession of him: And when I saw her in these unnatural and monstrous forms, I was exceedingly amazed at her grandeur and cruelty, and at the patience of God in suffering her to reign and tyrannize over his beloved people; as not knowing what to think of one that would sustain such a pompous, vile, and hideous character.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

7 Hereupon the angel observing it, said to me, Why did you seem to be so greatly astonished and confounded at this representation? I will explain the meaning of these emblems, which are so dark and mysterious to you, concerning this whorish woman, and the beast she rides upon, and which appear in this vision, according to what you had seen before, (chap. xiii. 1.) as having seven heads and ten horns. That which is figured out in this prophetic description is as follows:

8 The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder

8 The beast, which you saw, is a symbol of the Roman empire, as anciently governed by kings, consuls, dictators, *decemvirs* and military tribunes, but is no longer subsisting in either of those forms, it being now, at the time of this vision, under the government of emperors; or when the time comes, which the vision refers to, it may then be said, that the beast, signifying the Roman empire, was idolatrous and persecuting un-

N O T E.

\* Scaliger, Downham, and others, observe, that the word *mystery* was formerly wrote on the Pope's mitre, till the Prote-

stants alledged this passage of scripture to prove that the Church of Rome was Antichrist.

der, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

der *heathen magistrates*, but its *Pagan state* is now destroyed; and the empire, headed by the *Papacy*, will be of such a diabolical, wicked and tyrannical temper, as derives its original, and proceeds from the infernal malignant spirits of the bottomless pit, and will be supported by their instigation and assistance: But at length, the papal church, which had been destructive to the true church of Christ on earth, shall be utterly destroyed and sent down to hell, to share in torments with their instigators: And (excepting those, whom God has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, (Eph. i. 4. and see the note on 1 John i. 1.) and who are as particularly known by name, as if they were literally registered for eternal life in the book of his decrees, and in the book of the Lamb, as persons that were given of the Father to him, to be redeemed, and sanctified, and saved by him) the inhabitants of the popish territories will gaze with admiration, pleasure and superstitious veneration, when they shall see this beast, which in the forementioned senses was, and is not †, and yet exists in another form, and will be the same, in effect, as a persecuting and idolatrous paganizing power, which, in resemblance of the worship of *heathen idols*, will introduce the worship of angels, saints, and images.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

9 And here is a proper trial and exercise for a studious and inquisitive mind, that has a faculty of discerning, and spiritual wisdom to understand, reflect upon and compare the representation of characters, which are given in the preceding and following parts of this vision, as a key to open the meaning of it. It is therefore carefully to be observed and considered, that the seven heads of this idolatrous persecuting power, signified by *the beast*, are emblematical of the seven mountains or hills, on which, as is notorious, the city of *Rome* is built, and on which, as on an imperial seat, the great whorish woman is represented as fixing her throne, with as much power and authority as any ruler of the empire that had ever gone before her.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come;

10 And for a further understanding of this Romish antichristian power, it is to be observed, as another distinguishing character of it, that there will have been seven kings, or different forms of supreme government, which

#### N O T E.

† The conjectures about the meaning of this phrase, "the beast which was, and is not, and yet is, or and shall be, (*xai rousin*) as Steven's and the Alexandrian, and several other copies have it, are so many and dubious, that it is hard to say which

of them may be depended upon. But one or other of the two senses given in the paraphrase, appears to me as probable as any; and the reader is left to chuse that which pleases him best.

come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

which are also signified by seven heads; five of which at the time of this vision are abolished, as they consisted of a succession of *kings, consuls, &c.* according to what has been hinted, (*ver. 8.*); and one, even that of *Pagan* imperial government, is at this present time subsisting\*; And another which is to succeed it, namely, that of the *Christian* emperors, has not yet mounted the throne; and, when this arises, it will continue but for a little while, compared with the other supreme powers that went before, and will follow after it; which may be considered as pointing to *Constantine the great*, and his successors, under whom the Christian religion was established, and maintained with purity scarce a century and half; all which forms of government are to cease in their order, before that shall appear which is intended by the antichristian beast in this prophetic emblem.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

11 And the *Roman* civil power, on which the scarlet whore appeared to sit, (*ver. 3.*) and which, as has been said, (*ver. 8.*) was anciently administered in various forms of government, and at the time of this vision is not subsisting in either of those forms, but shall hereafter rise as an idolatrous power under her influence. This may be reckoned an *eighth* form of supreme government, in case you consider that under *Constantine the great* and his successors as the *seventh*. But if you consider the imperial government of *Constantine* and his successors as truly *Christian*, and so no head of idolatry, as all the preceding governments were; then the *Roman* power, signified by the beast, is to be reckoned only one of the *seven*, even the last of them in succession; and so points out the papacy which is to have its seat at *Rome*, with the Pope and his consistory of cardinals at the head of it, and all the civil power of the empire to support it; which will as certainly, in God's appointed and predicted time, be finally destroyed, as all the idols.

#### N O T E.

\* Kings in prophetic stile signify states or kingdoms, as appears from *Dan. vii. 17, 23.* and if, with several learned commentators, we take the sixth king to denote simply the imperial form of government, the powers of which were the same under *Pagan* and *Christian* emperors; then, as Mr Lowman thinks, the seventh head may point at the reign of the Gothic kings, or at the exarchate of *Ravenna*, which succeeded the destruction of the imperial government, and was in some respects a new form of govern-

ment different from that, and yet retained so much of its senatorial form, as to make it in that respect much of the same kind with the sixth: So that in some respects, according to this and another way of reckoning, as in the paraphrase, it may be called a seventh head or form of government; and in that way of reckoning the papal beast may be called the eighth; and yet on other accounts the beast may be reckoned the seventh, as succeeding to the sixth, or the imperial form of government.

idoltrous heads have been in their order, that went before it.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

12 And another sure note of the antichristian power is, that the ten horns, which you saw on the head of the papal beast, (*ver.* 3.) signify ten kings or principalities, that shall arise in the Western part of the Roman empire, as to be divided into ten kingdoms; but none of these potentates have received their distinct kingdoms at the time of this vision, but shall receive them as sovereign princes, about the same time \*, that the papal beast or antichristian power shall begin to erect its idolatrous empire; which may be considered as an intimation, that the rise of the Pope should be at the time when the empire would be divided into ten kingdoms by the barbarous nations, about the middle of the fifth century, soon after *Genfericus*, the *Vandal*, had taken *Rome*; and so the *man of sin* would be revealed, when the empire *that let or hindred*, while it was under one head, should be taken away. (2 *Thess.* ii. 3,—8)

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

13 These ten kingdoms, with sovereign princes at their head, how different soever they may be in secular interests, will be of the same mind in religious concerns, and, as with one heart, agree to pay homage to the papal power signified by the beast, and to surrender up their riches, arms and authority (*ἐξουσίαν*) to his will, and use them to support his supremacy and idolatrous interests and designs.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful.

14 These, under the influence of the papal beast, will set themselves against Christ, to oppose his doctrines, institutions, cause, interest, and people, by violent persecutions, and the power of the sword, and to force their consciences into submission, and blind obedience to the pretended infallibility, and ecclesiastical authority, superstition, and idolatry of the Pope. But, in the issue of the combat, the glorious Lamb of God shall be victorious over them, in and by means of the steadfastness of the faith, profession, and patient sufferings of his members, who will make a noble stand against

#### N O T E.

\* Most expositors, after Dr More, render *one hour* (*μια ὥρα*) the same time, as in *ver.* 13, 17. *one mind* (*μια γνώμη*) plainly signifies the same mind, and so *one heart*, and *one soul*, (*ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχή μία*) *Acts* iv. 32. signifies the same heart and soul. And the word rendered *hour* (*ὥρα*) is often used for and translated *time*. This makes the division of the empire into ten kingdoms contemporary with the rise of the beast.—These ten kingdoms are variously reckoned

up by Mr Mead and Sir Isaac Newton: But others suppose that there is no necessity of finding out that exact number of different kingdoms, neither more nor less; *ten* being sometimes put for *many*, a certain for an uncertain number. However, all history assures us, that when the northern nations broke in upon the Western Empire, it was divided into much about that number of kingdoms.



against all their enemies, and love not their lives unto death: For he by nature as God, and by constitution as Mediator, is the sovereign Lord of all earthly lords, and sovereign King over all the potentates of this world; as the government of the church and of all nations is upon his shoulders, to order and dispose of them according to his infinitely wise and holy will; and his disciples, who side with him against those common enemies, are effectually called by his grace; are a chosen and peculiar people, whom God has set apart for himself in his eternal purpose; and, in consequence of their election and effectual calling, are made sincere and faithful to him in their profession of his name and gospel, and perseverance in his ways and ordinances, whatever it may cost them.

14 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

15 And still further to explain the distinguishing marks of the antichristian whore, the angel said to me, The representation that was made of *many waters*, on which she sits, (*ver. 1.*) are an emblem of the people of the papacy under her extensive empire, and of the vast multitude of them of different nations and various languages, over which she reigns as a queen, and by which she is supported in her dominion, riches, and grandeur; and says, she *shall see no sorrow*, (*chap. xviii. 7.*)

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire:

16 And yet the *ten horns*, which were represented in your vision of the beast, and have been interpreted to signify ten distinct states or kingdoms, (*ver. 12.*) and which, amidst all the revolutions and alterations that may be made in them \*, will subsist under such like distinct governments, during the reign of the beast, and never be swallowed up in a universal monarchy by any that may aspire after it: Even these very nations or kingdoms, with their respective potentates, which were before engaged in the support and advancement of the whorish woman, shall, in God's appointed time, grow weary of her tyranny, oppressions, frauds, and abominable

#### N O T E.

\* The states or kingdoms, signified by the ten horns, are to be, at length, the instruments of the ruin, as they formerly were of the support of Antichrist. This supposes a continued succession of distinct nations, that originally belonged to the Roman empire; though there may be shiftings and changes in them, and they may not always be bounded just in the same limits as at the first division of the empire among them. (See the note on *ver. 12.*) And so the kings "that shall hate the whore," &c. are to be considered, not as the same individual persons

that at first supported her, but as their successors in various kingdoms, who will turn against her, as those of the reformed nations have already: and it is to be expected, that most, if not all the rest, will follow their example, and unite with them in a religious war against the Papacy; though, perhaps, some of them may persist in her idolatrous communion, till they shall see the time of her burning, and bewail her, (*chap. xviii. 9.*) and then shall either renounce her, or fall with her.

nable corruptions in doctrine and practice; and when they come to see how grossly she had imposed upon them, they should be incensed against, and abhor her, more than they ever before were in love with her; even as gallants use to behave toward a strumper, when they are convinced of her treacherous delusions, and of the evil of their former familiarities with her: And they shall withdraw their protection of her, and turn their arms against her, and strip her naked of all her riches, pomp, and power, and lay her waste by fire and sword, which shall not only destroy her, but be as tormenting to her, as though they were to gnaw her flesh off from her bones, and burn her to death by devouring flames, as was foretold by the prophet *Daniel*, (chap. vii. 11.) and as the daughter of a priest guilty of whoredom was to be burnt. (*Lev. xxi. 9.*)

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

17 For the great God and Governor of the world, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, and who turns them whithersoever he will, (*Prov. xxi. 1.*) has determined to give them up, for a time, to their own hearts lusts, which they freely and out of choice indulged; (see the notes on *John xii. 40.* and *Rom. ix. 18.*) He also, by an over-ruling providence, turned the voluntary current of their own sinful inclinations into such a course, as should eventually accomplish his purpose, relating to the use and progress of the papal power; and he permitted them, under the instigation of Satan and the workings of their own corruptions, to agree together to submit to its authority, superstition, and idolatry, and to surrender up their strength, riches, and even their crowns, to the service of this antichristian beast: But he did this only for a limited season, till all the words of God, contained in this and ancient prophecies, relating to the flourishing state of its dominion shall be fulfilled; and then, by a gracious and providential influence, or both, upon their hearts, he will incline them to accomplish the will of his command and pleasure, as well as the will of his purpose, relating to the utter destruction of the idolatrous power which they supported before. (*ver. 16.*)

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

18 And, to conclude, the plain marks of this antichristian power, relating to the place of its chief residence, The appearance of a whorish drunken woman, which you saw and so much wondered at, (*ver. 5, 6.*) represents the civil and ecclesiastical authority and dominion of the Pope and his consistory of cardinals, that is to be seated in, and raised to its height at *Rome*, the great metropolis; which, and no other, is at this very time to be considered as the mistress of the world, which

which bears sway over the kings of the earth, and particularly over the nations of the empire, that hath existed under various successive forms of government, but is now imperial, as the Pope's also, in a manner, will be in reigning over all the kingdoms into which the empire will then be divided.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How plain are the prophetic marks of the idolatrous and persecuting power of the papacy! *This* in a spiritual sense is the great whore, who makes blasphemous pretences, and is decked with sumptuous ornaments; whose distinguishing colours of purple and scarlet are the attire of Popes and Cardinals; who has intoxicated princes and people to join in her idolatries, and has glutted herself with the blood of numberless saints and witnesses for Christ: She is a mystery of iniquity; the very image of ancient *Babylon* for pride and luxury, persecution and idolatry; and is the grand parent of spiritual fornication, and of all abominable iniquity; she derives her original from hell itself; and is the great beast, that reigns over vast multitudes of people of all nations, and draws the admiration of all under her dominion, except those that are chosen of God to eternal life: Her seat of empire is at the great city of *Rome*, which is built upon seven hills, and was the metropolis of the *Roman* Monarchy: She rose as the seventh idolatrous and persecuting head, after the destruction of those that preceded her, under various forms of government, in the *Roman* empire; upon the division of which into ten kingdoms, she set up her throne with supreme authority, making use of their strength, as ten horns of power to support and defend her ecclesiastical tyranny; and she, by divine permission, seduced them into a compliance with her cruel and idolatrous usurpations, and into a furious opposition to Christ, his people and cause. To whom can all these descriptions agree, but to the *Romish* papal power? How amazingly monstrous, and yet just, is this divine portrait of her! And how great a part of wisdom is it to find her out, by applying these characters to her! to whom alone they belong! But O what a comfort ought it to be to the church of Christ, and what a terror to the antichristian harlot, that she, who has been so destructive to others, shall finally go into perdition! The glorious Lamb, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, shall overcome her, by animating the faith and patience, and emboldening the holy profession of those that are chosen and called, and faithful in their adherence to him; and in his appointed time he will turn the hearts of those very powers against her, that were before in love with her, and united all their forces to uphold her. He will spirit them up to desert, hate, and oppose her; to strip her of all her riches and grandeur; and to prey upon her, and pursue her with fire and sword, till she be utterly destroyed by as painful a death, as if her flesh were to be gnawn off from her bones, and she to be consumed, as by devouring fire, in the conflagration of *Rome*, and by the total ruin of all the territories under her dominion.

### C H A P. XVIII.

*Another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical Babylon, 1,—7. And another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God to come out of her, lest, partaking of her sins, they partake also of her plagues, 4,—8. Represents the lamentation of kings, merchants, and mariners over her, 9,—19. And calls upon the church to rejoice in God's taking righteous vengeance upon her, who had slain the saints; and whose utter and irrecoverable ruin is signified by the emblem of*

a millstone thrown with violence by a mighty angel into the sea,  
20,—24.

## TEXT.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed for-

## PARAPHRASE.

AND after the explication that had been given me in the last vision of the woman and the scarlet-coloured beast on which she sat, I beheld another angel descending from heaven in most illustrious splendor †, as dispatched with an immediate commission from thence, and invested with great power, and authority; and the church on earth was irradiated with his surrounding light and glory, like what appeared to *Ezekiel* in his vision of the glory of the God of *Israel*, which filled the house of the Lord. (*chap. xliii. 2,—5.*)

2 And he proclaimed with an exceeding majestic, loud and articulate voice, saying, in the very words that foretold, and were accomplished in the destruction of the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (*Isa. xxi. 9.*) to this effect, The papal hierarchy and power, which for persecution, pride, idolatry, and all manner of abominations, may fitly be stiled *Mystical Babylon*, whose dominion is with great authority and wide extent, will soon be as certainly destroyed, as if it already were actually fallen from all its riches, grandeur, and power into the most deplorable ruins: And to certify this with the greater vehemence, and assurance, he repeated the words, *is fallen, is fallen*; and added that, instead of her former pomp and splendor, she shall be as hideous and desolate, as the most depopulated and forlorn desert, that is haunted by demons or satyrs, and all unclean spirits, which use to rove about in such places, (*Luke xi. 24.*); and that is the receptacle of doleful creatures, such as screech-owls, cormorants and bitterns, and all sorts of loathsome fowls, which usually dwell in horrid ruins and solitary wildernesses, and make a dismal noise, according to what was denounced against ancient *Babylon*. (*Isa. xliii. 19,—22. and xiv. 23.*)

3 For all nations under her jurisdiction have been intoxicated by her idolatries, that expose her to, and will bring down upon her the dreadful vengeance of God, which she deserves, and must suffer, for her spiritual fornication: And she has not only been guilty of this abominable crime herself; but the earthly kings, who

## NOTE.

† This angel seems to have been Christ, the Angel of the covenant, with whose "glory the earth was lightened;" Once it certainly was the glory of the Jehovah of

Israel that lightened the earth, and filled his house, in *Ezekiel's* vision, of which this bears a resemblance. (See the notes on *ch. vii. 2. and viii. 3.*)

fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

who had given their power to the beast, (*chap. xvii. 17.*) have been prevailed upon, by her enchantments, to support, and join with her in idolatrous worship, which is spiritual whoredom; and carnally minded men, under her dominion, that deal in her pretended spiritual wares, especially at *Rome*, such as pardons, indulgences, dispensations, and popish trinkets, &c. and that make merchandise of mens souls, (*ver. 13.*) have amassed together immense riches through the strong enticements of her spiritual commodities, which have been sold at high rates, and brought in vast gains, to feed their own and her luxury.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

4 Hereupon, I heard another solemn proclamation immediately from the throne of God in heaven, saying, in his love, care and tenderness to those that belong to him, but are mingled with this apostate church, in like manner as he warned *Israel* to flee from the old *Babylon*, when it was to be destroyed, (*Isa. xlviii. 20.* and *lii. 11.* and *Jer. l. 8.* and *li. 6.*) Depart, my people, and be ye separate from this mystical *Babylon*; touch no unclean thing; but flee with all speed from it, and openly protest against it, that ye may have no communion with, nor so much as connive at her idolatrous and wicked practices, and so be partakers of her guilt; and that ye may not be involved with her in the dreadful judgments and desolations which are now coming upon her in the effusion of the *seventh* and last great vial of my wrath, according to the representation that has been made of it, (*chap. xvi. 17,—21.*) as the just punishment of all her sins.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

5 For the multitude of her iniquities are of such an enormous size, of so high aggravations, and long continuance, as have made her fully ripe for judgment: Their provoking cry, like the sins of *Sodom* and the ancient *Babylon*, (*Gen. xix. 13.* and *Jer. li. 9.*) have reached up to heaven; and God is now in his awful and terrible justice coming forth to call them to remembrance, and to execute complete vengeance upon her for them.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double,

6 This is the time for you, my servants and people, to repay tribulation and distress to her, by fire and sword, in a righteous war against her, as the due reward of her cruel persecutions and oppressions of you, and your faithful predecessors in former ages, according to the law of retaliation, (*Exod. xxi. 23, 24.*); and ye are commissioned from heaven to multiply calamities doubly upon her, to her utter destruction, not from a spirit of private revenge, but as authorized instruments of divine justice

justice, in punishing her to the uttermost for all her evil deeds, according to the law which, in cases of robbery, required double restitution, (*Exod. xxii. 4, 7, 9.*); and according to God's threatening of *Israel's* enemies, that he would recompense their iniquity and their sin double, (*Jer. xvi. 18.*); as she has wrung out, and made you drink the cup of sorrow and affliction; so now ye are called to fill out to her a cup of doubly bitter and deadly ingredients, for her to drink to the very dregs.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

7 In proportion to her pride and self-confidence, in which she has magnified and exalted herself, and to her luxurious way of living, render to her tormenting misery and anguish, in her utter confusion and overthrow: For she being the whore on many waters, (*chap. xvii. 15.*) proudly boasts of her dominion over a multitude of people and nations in church and state, and flatters herself in her own conceit, saying, in her vain and baughty mind, like *Babylon* of old, which was called the *Lady of kingdoms*, (*Isa. xlvii. 5, 8.*) I sit with imperial majesty, pomp and safety, after the manner of a mighty queen in her most exalted state and firmest establishment; and I neither am bereaved of any dignity, power, or pleasure, like a widow deprived of her defence and strength, glory and comfort in the loss of her husband; nor shall my throne ever be shaken, or any kind of tribulation come upon me.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

8 Because she is thus insolent and vain-glorious, and fondly imagines that no mischief or danger can approach her; therefore shall her punishment and ruin come unexpectedly, and all on sudden, as it were in one day upon her; as was said of the ancient *Babylon*, (*Isa. xlvii. 9, 11.*); death, by pestilence, or sword, or both, shall cut off multitudes of her subjects; and lamentation and mourning for the loss of her children, and destruction by famine, or the want of all necessary refreshment and support, shall meet upon her; and she shall be utterly consumed by fire, (*chap. xvii. 16.*); for the Lord *Jehovah*, who righteously judges and condemns her, and has determined to destroy her, is almighty; so that there is no resisting his power, who is able to execute the decreed vengeance, and will certainly do it.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when

9 And so absolute and unavoidable shall her destruction be, that the earthly-minded princes and potentates of this world, who, continuing under her jurisdiction and in her communion, have complied with and supported her idolatrous injunctions and practices, and indulged themselves in pomp and luxury with her, shall not be able to give her any further assistance, or protection;

when they shall  
see the smoke of  
her burning,

tion; but shall bitterly mourn over her helpless state, and lament her doleful distress and ruin, when they shall behold the sad tokens of her torment and desolation, as appearing like horrid pillars of smoke, that rise up from a raging fire in the conflagration of cities \*; and especially when they see *Rome* itself, the seat of her dominion, all in flames through the righteous vengeance of God upon her.

10 Standing a-  
far off for the  
fear of her tor-  
ment, saying,  
Alas, alas, that  
great city Baby-  
lon, that mighty  
city! for in one  
hour is thy judg-  
ment come.

10 They being dismayed at this awful judgment, and terribly afraid lest they should fall with her in the common calamity, and so partake of her plagues, as they had of her sins, will endeavour to get as far as possible out of the way of danger; and standing at a distance, like spectators full of confusion and astonishment, will cry out in the anguish of their souls, alas! alas! What dreadful and unexpected wo and misery is this! What desolation and distress is that great city, which is called mystical *Babylon*, that strong and powerful city, now brought into! What is become of all her authority, pomp and dominion, which are fallen with her! What an amazing revolution is here! For all on a sudden, as it were in one hour, that was little thought of before, thy judgment, condemnation, and execution, are come upon thee, O thou mistress of the papal world, who *satest as a queen* in all thy grandeur and boasted security, *saying, I shall see no sorrow.* (ver. 7.)

11 And the  
merchants of the  
earth shall weep  
and mourn over  
her: for no man  
buyeth her mer-  
chandize any  
more:

11 And as the merchants bewailed the destruction of ancient *Tyre*, that mighty flourishing and trading city, (*Ezek. xxvii. 37, &c.*); so the earthly-minded dealers in the spiritual merchandize of antichristian *Rome*, to put off her indulgencies, absolutions, popish relics and preferments, will in the grief of their hearts, lament with weeping over her, as not being able to afford her any relief in the day of her distress, nor to get any further advantages by her; because there will then be an entire end of all her gainful traffic; and from thenceforward none will ever be so imposed upon and deluded, as to purchase her ecclesiastical commodities any more.

12 The mer-  
chant

12 So that they can no longer delight and pride them-  
selves

#### N O T E.

\* "The smoke of her torment," may be taken, as in the paraphrase, either in the metaphorical sense to signify the most dreadful and entire destruction of all her pomp and power, through the whole extent of the Papacy; or in the literal sense for the conflagration of *Rome*, the seat of the Pope's authority, and the capital city of his dominion, which will, probably, be destroyed,

either by subterraneous fires bursting out of the volcanoes, that are frequent in those parts; or by the fire of enemies in besieging it, when the ten kings shall "hate the whore," and burn her with fire," (chap. xvii. 16.) or by fire immediately from heaven, like that which consumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

chandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

selves in the prodigious gains that they were wont to make by this sort of merchandise † : It will never bring them in, as formerly, gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, to enrich themselves, and to support and display the splendor of their hierarchy and worship; nor fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet, to adorn themselves, and make distinguishing vestments for their priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes; nor thyine-wood, so much esteemed for its grateful scent and durable strength, for building or decorating magnificent houses and temples; nor any of those various sorts of vessels made of ivory, and of the most beautiful and costly wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, which used to be wrought into idolatrous images, and into all manner of utensils for superstitious services and ornaments.

12 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

13 Nor shall their merchandise any longer procure to them fragrant cinnamon, and sweet odours, and ointments, and frankincense, to gratify their senses, and perfume and beautify their bodies, or to feed their pride and luxury, and make their sweet-smelling incense and costly ointments for idolatrous and superstitious purposes; nor wine and oil, to cheer their hearts and make their faces shine, or to be idolatrously and superstitiously used in the sacrifice of the mass, and in extreme unction; nor fine flour, and wheat, and beasts and sheep, to be tithed by the priests for the sustenance of nature, or supplying them with the necessaries, much less the conveniences and comforts of the animal life; nor horses and chariots, and (καρματα) the bodies of men to furnish out a pompous equipage and show away with the magnificence of haughty Popes and prelates; nor shall they any more enslave mens souls by usurping a tyrannical power over their consciences, and drawing money from them for pardons and indulgencies, and for praying them out of purgatory, which, in reality, its being paid for destroying, instead of saving their souls.

14 And the fruits

14 And the products of your iniquitous merchandise,

#### N O T E.

† The description given in this and the following verses of the merchandise and lamented destruction of the Romish Babylon, need not in all particulars be taken in a literal, but only in an accommodated sense, like what is suggested in the paraphrase; and may be considered as a strong and striking figurative representation of her downfall from all her former state and affluence: and of the horrible disappointment, loss, and trouble, which by that means will come upon the po-

pish traffickers, in her egregious impositions and delusions, who had amassed to themselves vast riches and honours in the days of her prosperity: And this is beautifully described in most of the very same terms that are used in the 16th and 17th chapters of Ezekiel, with relation to Tyre, which had been notorious for idolatry, wickedness, and power; and for the most gainful and extensive merchandise.



fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

O Mystical *Babylon*, in which you so much gloried, and of which you were so eagerly desirous, such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, which were the top of your ambition; all these are now cut off: And all things that were delicious to the taste, and made a gay appearance to the eye, are now removed far from you, who shall never find your account in them any more; but, shall be entirely stript, and remain destitute of them all, past retrieve for ever. Thus all the merchandise of antichristian *Rome*, by the factors of her spurious wares, shall like that of the ancient wicked *Tyre*, utterly fail, and never be recovered.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

15 They that dealt in these commodities, and were enriched in their *temporal*, and vainly boasted of their being so in their *spiritual* concerns, by her means, shall, like the kings of the earth, (*ver. 9, 10.*) unable to help her, remove and keep at as great a distance as may be from her, for fear that, as they had been partakers of her guilt and riches, they should share in torments with her; at the very sight of which, they will vent the sorrows of their hearts with floods of tears, and great lamentation over her.

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls! for in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

16 And crying out with bitter astonishment and condolance, will say, Alas! alas! How tremendous is the destruction of *Rome*, that great and famous city, where the head of the papacy, who said in her heart, *I sit a queen and shall see no sorrow*, (*ver. 7.*) had her imperial seat, and in the height of her pomp, power, and riches, was sumptuously arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and set off with the glittering ornaments of gold, and all manner of precious stones, and pearls! Her case is extremely deplorable: For all on a sudden, as though it were in one unexpected and unthought-of hour, she is divested of all her rich treasures, and reduced to the utmost poverty and distress.

17 And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.

17 And the lower ranks of her officers, that were devoted to her service, and retailed her pardons, and indulgencies, and other trumpery, and compassed sea and land to make profelytes, such as priests, monks, friars, and Jesuits, who got their living by this trade, and may be represented in allusion to the lamenters of *Tyre's* ruin, (*Ezek. xxvii. 29,—33.*) under the emblem of masters of ships, and all their ship-mates and mariners, and all traffickers in them by sea: All these as unable as the kings and merchants, (*ver 9, 11.*) to help her, shall likewise get out of the reach of her calamities, as far as they can, for fear of sharing in her punishments, as they had in her crimes and gains.

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

18 And when they see the dismal tokens of her utter destruction, like the thick and gloomy columns of smoke, that rise from every part of a city all in flames, (see the note on *ver. 9*) they shall cry out with amazement, lamentation, and horror, saying, as was said of *Tyre*, (*Ezek. xxvii. 32.*) What city so grand and magnificent, wealthy, powerful and proud, was ever so entirely and speedily involved in misery and ruin, as this great city, together with her vast dominion, is, beyond all that could have been imagined!

19 And as great mourners have used, in their distress to throw dust upon their heads, (*Josh. vii. 6.* and *Job ii. 12.*) and the bewailers of *Tyre* are represented, by this token, (*Ezek. xxvii. 30.*); so these hucksters of *Rome's* wares will go into all expressions of the deepest sorrow, and cry out with weeping and bitter lamentation, Alas! alas! for that great city, as mystical *Babylon* is often stiled in this prophecy, may also be well compared to *Tyre* (see the note on *ver. 12*) How shocking are her desolations and miseries, who has been in such a flourishing state as to enrich all her devotees that carried on traffic with, and for her, in employing their vessels at sea to export her pardons, indulgencies, &c. which were sold and purchased at costly rates by her authority! What a surprizing, sudden, and miserable change is now made upon her state and condition! For she, as it were in one hour, is reduced, and spoiled of all her former wealth, power and grandeur; utterly incapable of any further helping her servants, or of being helped by them.

20 But, said the voice from heaven, (*ver. 4.*) How much soever they, that trafficked and gained worldly riches and honours by her influence and authority, may sigh and mourn for her desolation; it will be a just occasion of great joy and gladness to the saints, while they consider it, not as the destruction of their fellow-creatures, but as the day of their own happy deliverance from the oppressions of this antichristian enemy, and of God's glorifying himself in her righteous overthrow, and in erecting the glory of Christ's kingdom on her ruins: Triumph ye therefore over her, O church of Christ, both in heaven and on earth, and all ye holy apostles and prophets, that have ministerially laid the foundation upon which the church is built, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*, (*Eph. ii. 20.*) And be exceeding glad, O all ye faithful pastors and teachers, whom he has sent; and all ye interpreters of his word, whom he has raised up to preach and explain his pure gospel,

gospel, as his witnesses who have prophesied in sackcloth, (*chap. xi. 3.*); for now God has awfully displayed his terrible justice, and the truth of his predictions, (*chap. xvi.*) in taking full vengeance, for your sakes, upon this corrupt and persecuting power, which sin would have destroyed the foundation of the church itself, and all that are built upon it.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

21 And still further to confirm all this, as the prophet *Jeremiah* was ordered to bind a stone to the book he had read, and cast it into the midst of *Euphrates*, saying, *Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her*, (*Jer. li. 63, 64.*) so a glorious angel, who excelled in strength, took up, as he appeared in my vision, a huge stone in his hand, like a great millstone, and threw it with mighty force into the depth of the sea, into which it suddenly sunk, never to rise again: And to explain the meaning of this emblematical action, he said, After this violent manner shall that great city, mystical *Babylon*, and all her power, authority and magnificence, be suddenly cast into utter destruction, and never shall be rebuilt, or recover strength and dominion, or have any place in the world at all, from henceforth for ever.

22 And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen, of what ever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

22 And as to you, O mystical *Babylon*, according to what was threatened against apostate *Israel*, (*Jer. xxv. 10.*) all your days of superstitious and civil mirth and pleasure shall come to a perpetual end: no concerts of players upon harps and other musical instruments, nor any melody of pipes and trumpets shall ever be heard in your churches, or in your merry meetings any more; and all your spiritual traffic and secular trade and business, together with all your choristers that adulterate the worship of God; and all your cunning artificers, and laborious workmen, such as carpenters and smiths, (*Isa. iii. 3.* and *Jer. xxiv. 1.*) to serve the common conveniences of mankind, shall be taken away from you; and even the necessities of life shall fail, inasmuch that the noise of a millstone, to grind the corn for food and sustenance, shall never more be heard in you.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were

23 And nothing comfortable of any kind shall ever be enjoyed any more; no, not so much as the light of a candle, to relieve the horrid darkness of the night, shall ever be seen in you again; much less shall any bridal lamp, or nuptial songs, or rejoicings of a bridegroom over his bride, or propagating of families and inheritances, be ever found any more in you: For your dealers in spiritual merchandise enriched themselves, and became the great and dignified men of your earth-

were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

ly empire, such as cardinals and prelates, by means of the iniquitous trade which they carried on to promote your authority and influence: For, by your bewitching allurements, all nations under your dominion were imposed upon, and deluded into an admiration of, and compliance with your superstition and idolatry.

24 And what greatly adds to all these provocations of Mystical *Babylon*, and aggravates her crimes, condemnation, and misery, and aloud proclaims the righteousness of God's judgments upon her, is, that she has filled up the measure of the cruelties and murders, which have been practised upon the faithful ministering servants and holy people of God, and upon all that by her authority, canons, and decrees, have ever been put to death for righteousness sake, throughout her territories, and to the utmost extent of her influence upon earth, as by her persecutions she has approved of, imitated and exceeded all that were ever known before; and so the blood of all martyrs for Christ is found in her skirts, and, by just construction, is chargeable upon her: (See *Matth.* xxiii. 29,—35.) And therefore God has given her blood to drink, for she is worthy. (Chap. xvi. 6.)

#### RECOLLECTIONS.

How certain, sudden, and irrecoverable will be the destruction of the seat of the beast at Rome, and of the whole papal power of her! She is the mystical *Babylon*, whose fall, as it were in one hour, was pronounced by an illustrious angel, and further confirmed by the emblem of a vast stone plunged with violence into the sea, from whence it never can rise again. How dreadful and total will her ruin be! She who flourished in pomp, luxury and plenty, and thought she sat as a queen and should see no sorrow, shall become desolate, like a horrid, uninhabited wilderness, haunted by demons, and doleful birds, and savage beasts. All her pride, riches, and luxury, shall be turned into shame, want, and misery; all her joy into mourning; and all her pleasure into torment. She shall be stripped of all her greatness and sumptuous ornaments, and cut off from all the comforts, conveniences, and necessities of life: and all ranks of people under her dominion shall be reduced to the utmost poverty and distress; and she shall be repaid with the heaviest vengeance from God for all the wrath that she had recked upon his faithful servants and people. The tokens of her torment shall be as visible and effecting, as the thick and fiery smoke that ascends from the ruins of a city all in flames: and when her friends that had supported her, and had been profited, to a greater or less degree, in temporal concerns, by the sale of her indulgences and pardons, and other spiritual commodities, by which she deceived the nations, and drew them into superstition and idolatry; when these shall see her sudden, miserable, and utter desolation, they shall be astonished, and bitterly lament over her, as unable to help her, or to be helped by her any more; and shall strive to get as far as they can out of the way of God's judgments upon her, lest they should be swallowed up in her calamities, as they had been partakers of her sins. And O how righteously will these judgments be executed upon her, whose enormous and multiplied iniquities are heaped up, as it were, to heaven, and cry aloud for vengeance to come down upon her! Her superstition, lewdness and idolatry, luxury and haughtiness, cruelty and persecution of the

lights and servants of Christ; her merchandise of the souls, as well as bodies of men, to their destruction; her allurements of kings and nations to forsake God, and join themselves to idols, shall all be remembered in his wrath, to her everlasting confusion. With what abhorrence should all the people of God separate from her communion, lest they partake of her sins, and of her punishments! And how should they rejoice and triumph, in reflection that the time is coming, when God will vindicate his righteous cause, and avenge them, in their just destruction, and will deliver them from all her molestations for ever!

## C H A P. XIX.

*The church both in heaven and on earth triumph, and praise the Lord for his righteous judgments upon the great whore of Babylon, and for the honour of their own espousal to Christ, 1,—8. An angel pronounces them blessed, and refuses the worship which John offered him, 9, 10. Then follows another vision of Christ, as going forth on a white horse at the head of his army, which is also mounted on white horses, to make war against the beast, and his armies, which are utterly and miserably destroyed, 11,—21.*

## TEXT.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia: salvation, and glory, and honour and power unto the Lord our God:

## PARAPHRASE.

AND after the preceding visions of the total ruin of the great whore of *Babylon*, in the downfall of the papal chief city and empire, methought I heard an exceeding loud and joyful acclamation of the heavenly church, saying, in obedience to the order, (*chap. xviii. 20.*) *Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord*; We applaud, and call upon all the saints on earth to join with us in blessing the Lord our God for the happiness of his people, in their complete deliverance from the corruptions and tyranny of the antichristian church. The glory, honour and power, which are conspicuous in all God's works of creation, providence, and redemption, and particularly in this remarkably glorious dispensation, ought to be ascribed, with the greatest veneration and cheerfulness, to his holy name.

1 For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

2 For he has faithfully fulfilled his promises to his people, as well as proved himself to be true to his threatnings against his and their enemies; and has acted a most righteous part in the punishment he has denounced against, and inflicted upon them: For he has condemned, and executed judgment upon antichristian *Rome*, (which may be compared to a great *Strumpet*,) and upon all her lovers, for the iniquity of her doings, and for their compliance with her allurements, who had spread idolatrous fornication throughout her territories on the earth, and thereby corrupted the religion and manners of her subjects: And now God has taken just vengeance upon her for all the blood of his saints and

ministring servants, which she has unrighteously and cruelly caused to be shed, on account of their faithfulness to him; and he has requited her, in kind, according to her deserts.

3 And again they said, Alleluiah. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

3 And they repeated their Hallelujahs †, beginning, carrying on, and ending their song, with joyous and triumphant thanksgivings and praises, for the utter dissolution of the idolatrous and persecuting power of Rome. And the perpetuity and misery of her overthrow, never to revive any more, was represented by the emblem of horrible smoke from the unquenchable fire that consumed her, as incessantly ascending from her ruins to an endless eternity.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.

4 Then the four-and-twenty elders, and the four living creatures, the representatives of the church, and of gospel-ministers, (see the notes on chap. iv. 4, 6.) prostrated themselves with the profoundest reverence, and paid their adorations and praises to the great God, who appeared as seated on his imperial throne, saying, We heartily join with the general assembly (ver. 1.) in their hymn of praise for the judgments which thou hast executed upon this antichristian-power; and in testimony of our high approbation of, and concurrence with, all the ascriptions of honour to thee on that important occasion, we add our *Amen: Hallelujah*, praised be the Lord!

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise

5 Soon after this I heard a voice, which seemed to be uttered by a glorious angel, and to come forth immediately from before the throne of God in heaven ‡, saying,

#### N O T E S.

† Hallelujah is a most lively and comprehensive expression of praise, often used, and translated, "Praise ye the Lord," in the Psalms; the five last of which, with several others, begin and end, as this heavenly hymn doth, with that word: And several expositors have thought that this being originally a Hebrew word, retained in this song of praise, intimates that, upon the destruction of Rome, which may probably be by fire, (see the note on chap. xviii. 9.) the Jews shall be converted, who were prejudiced against Christianity, all along before, by the idolatry and persecutions of the Papacy; and that they are here called upon to join with the Gentile church, in praising the Lord for this wonderful and entire destruction of the Romish antichristian-power.

‡ "A voice came out from the throne," is not here to be understood as the immediate voice of God himself: For he could not properly say, "Praise our God, all ye that fear him." Nor do I apprehend it to have

been the immediate voice of Christ. For though he, as man and Mediator, called his disciples his "brethren," and sent a message to them, saying, (John xx. 17.) see the paraphrase there,) "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;" yet he there expressed his own and their relation to God distinctly, in such a manner, as reserved the pre-eminence to himself. However, admitting that Christ, as the head of the church, might have called upon them, saying, without any impropriety, "Praise our God;" yet the person who uttered this voice seems to be the same that ordered the apostle John to write, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb," and that refused the worship which John offered to pay him, under some mistake, (ver. 9, 10.) whereas our blessed Lord never refused religious homage from any, (which was always his due as God) even while he was in this state of humiliation upon earth; much less

Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

saying to the church-militant on earth, Exalt, adore and bless the name of our gracious God, who has faithfully performed his promises to you, O all ye his true worshippers, that love and serve him, and reverence and fear his holy Majesty, whether ye be of high or low degree, or whatever be your rank and attainments of a religious or civil nature.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

6 And according to this divine command, methought I instantly heard an innumerable company, even all *that feared the Lord both small and great*, joining with the utmost alacrity in acclamations of joy and praise, on account of the glorious and happy state of the church on earth, consequent to the overthrow and punishment of all antichristian powers, (*chap. xx. 1,—6.*); and the sound of their united voices was, for strength and loudness, like the noise of vast cataracts of water, or even the roaring of the sea, and the strongest claps of thunder, saying, *Hallelujah*; We exult and triumph, and call upon all others to praise the Lord: For now in a more eminent and glorious manner, than ever before, the Almighty Jehovah, the ever living and true God\*, to whose empire the whole creation is subject, manifests his great power and glory in his ruling over all; and has set up his kingdom of grace in our world with the greatest majesty, light, and liberty, purity, peace, and extensive dominion, to the confusion of his enemies, and the joy of his saints.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

7 Let us now indulge a sacred pleasure and delight in him, and pay all honour, thanksgiving and praise to him: For the happy time is now come publicly and visibly to solemnize the espousal of Christ to his church, (*2 Cor. xi. 2.*) whom he has redeemed to his Father and purchased for himself, with his own precious blood, as *the Lamb that was slain*, (*chap. v. 9, 12.*); and the being joined in a marriage-covenant with him, who *rejoices over her, as a bridegroom over the bride*†, (*Isa.*

lxii.

#### N O T E S.

erg it be supposed that he would refuse it in his state of exaltation in heaven. I therefore take this voice to have been pronounced by a created angel, who was near the throne of God, and was probably either the angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this prophecy to his servant John, (*chap. i. 1.*) or the angel who had "threw unto him the judgment of the great whore," (*chap. xvii. 1.*)

\* "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," may be considered with relation to the Father, or to the Son, who is also "the mighty God," (*Isa. ix. 6.*) and I think is filled "the

"Lord God Almighty," *Rev. vi. 17.* (See the note there.) Accordingly, the kingdom here spoken of is "the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ;" and is called "the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ," *chap. xi. 15.* and *xii. 10.*

† Dr More and Mr Mede suppose, that "the marriage of the Lamb, and his wife's being made ready," refer to the conversion of the Jew, who being formerly invited to "the wedding of the King's son," refused to come: but now, being ready and prepared, made haste to come.

lxii. 5.) is now cheerfully waiting in a prepared state and frame to meet her bridegroom, and enter into his joy.

8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

8 And that she might be suitably adorned for his reception, it was graciously vouchsafed to her that, as grand bridegrooms use to make presents of rich attire to their brides of inferior character, that they may make a becoming appearance at the celebration of their nuptials; so she should be beautifully decked, at her husband's expence, with the most excellent ornaments; which may be compared to the finest linen that is spotless and bright, a lively emblem of honour, favour, and acceptance, and of purity and holiness: For the fine linen signifies (*δικαιοσύνη*) the righteousness both of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ to intitle her to heavenly bliss, and of sanctification by his Spirit to make her meet for enjoying it; both of which are put upon all the saints, like *garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, and the wedding garment.* (Isa. lxi. 10. and Matth. xxii. 11, 12.)

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

9 Then the angel, who had uttered the voice from the heavenly throne, (see the note on *ver. 5.*) applied himself directly to me, saying, In consideration of what you have now heard, write down, for the standing use of the church under all tribulations, that they, and they only, are substantially and securely blessed, and shall be so for ever, who are effectually called by divine grace, and admitted to all spiritual entertainments and delights, which may be figured out by the marriage-feast, that the Lamb of God has made for his bride. (*Luke xiv. 15, 16.*) And he, who talked with me, further said, This, and all other things revealed in your visions, are the infallible truths of God, and shall certainly have a punctual accomplishment in their season, according to his word. (*Chap. xxi. 5. and xxi. 6.*)

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him: And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

10 Upon hearing these great and comfortable things from the angel, who appeared in such an illustrious and majestic form, as seemed like that of the angel of the covenant, I, in a transport of admiration and joy, prostrated myself at his feet to pay him divine honours, as the Son of God: But he hastily stopped me short, and, correcting my mistake, said to me, in like manner as the apostles *Peter, Paul, and Barnabas* did to those that offered them religious worship, (*Acts x. 25, 26. and xiv. 13,—15.*) Take heed what ye do\*: This sort of

worship

N O T E.

\* The worship which John offered to this glorious angel, (see the note on *ver. 5.*) seems not to have been merely civil respect, but of a religious nature: For there was no reason



worship must not be paid to me, who, though a glorified spirit, am not a divine person, but only one of your fellow-servants and brethren in my present employment, who am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to make known to you the things that relate to his person, cause, and government, and to the revolutions he will make in the church and in the world, as you also are to communicate them to others. (*Chap. i. 1, 2*) Let all your religious worship be reserved for, and paid only to God, to whom alone it is due, (*Matth. iv. 10.*); and by no means to me: For the testimony I have born to Jesus, the Saviour, is dictated to me by the same Divine Spirit, who inspired the ancient prophets, and who by me now reveals to you the future events contained in your visions, that you may convey them to the church for their support and comfort: And therefore religious adoration is no more due from you to me, than from me to you; and so he rectified my mistake.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

11 In my next prophetic vision, methought I saw heaven itself opened, from whence the Saviour came forth, with divine majesty and glory, to espouse the cause of his people in the most effectual manner against their antichristian enemies; and, behold, a figurative representation of a white horse appeared to my view, such as generals were wont to ride in solemn triumphs; Which may be considered as an emblem of the everlasting gospel, that should prevail more extensively and successfully, than ever before, with light and purity, speed and power, in its last promulgation through the earth: And he, who appeared as riding prosperously upon it to guide and govern its course, was the Lord Christ, the Captain of salvation, who is, ever was, and will be, and may justly be called, and in this glorious dispensation,

#### N O T E.

reason why the angel should refuse to accept of civil respect: and his ordering the apostle to pay that very sort of worship to God which he was about to offer him, (*chap. xxii. 9.*) was surely more than civil honour, which is infinitely beneath God's acceptance, and would be to put him upon a level with some exalted creature.—It may indeed seem strange, that the apostle John should, after this rebuke, so far forget himself, as to attempt such an idolatrous act a second time, as in *chap. xxii. 8.* But it is to be considered, that as Peter, in the mount of Transfiguration, was in such an ecstacy of awful wonder and joy, that "he knew not what to say," (*Mark ix. 6.*) so the apostle John was in such a transport and surprise, as might not admit of calm and deliberate re-

fection, some time after the former rebuke, which was not quite so strong and decise as that which followed; and might precipitate him into the second, as it had into the first mistake. And if here was a neglect of due consideration, he might be suffered to fall into the same error again, to the great imperfection attends the best of men in this world, and to give an opportunity for the more remarkably doing the eternal rule of all religious worship at the close of the canon of the New Testament: as also for the more strongly condemning the worship of saints and angels, and guiding the people of God against it, which the spirit of prophecy foresaw would notoriously prevail in the antichristian church of Rome.

dispensation will eminently appear to be, faithful and true to his Father, who appointed him, and to all those that put their trust in him; faithful in performing his promises to them, and true in executing his threatnings upon his and their adversaries: And his procedure is with righteous judgment in taking the part of his church against his and their enemies, and in setting himself, as in battle-array, against all that oppose his cause and kingdom in the world.

11 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself:

12 The eyes of this august person appeared to be as bright and penetrating, awful, terrible, and burning, as a flame of fire, (*chap. i. 14.*); and on his head was a representation of many crowns set, as it were, one upon another, the symbols of his natural and mediatorial authority, and universal dominion over the church and the world, in all spiritual and temporal concerns, and of his subduing all nations and things to himself: And he bore an adorable name, which, as expressive of his divine nature and perfections, and of his dignity and authority, as *the Word made flesh*, (*John i. 1, 14.*) was so wonderful, (*Isa. ix. 6.*) that, like the name *Jehovah*, no mere creature knew any thing of it, till it was revealed; and even then it was so incomprehensible by any of them, that none but himself, to the exclusion of all creatures, could fully understand the deep mysteries contained in it. (*See Matth. xi. 27.*)

13 And he was clothed with vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The word of God.

13 He was further represented to me, like a mighty and victorious general, as wearing a garment all over stained with the blood of his vanquished and slaughtered enemies, over whom he was to gain a compleat conquest in his state of exaltation, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings unto death, when his raiment was dyed with his own blood in his state of humiliation: And one of the glorious names that properly belongs to him, and he is known by in the church, according to divine revelation, (*chap. i. 2, 9. and John i. 1, 14.*) is the eternally essential and personal, who in due time became the declarative and executive word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

14 And his armies, consisting not merely of the heavenly host of angels, who as ministring spirits attend him, but chiefly, if not wholly, of his ministring servants and faithful people, who are born from above, have their citizenship in heaven, and are joined in communion with *the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven*: These, like a numerous and well-disciplined army of *the called, chosen and faithful*, (*chap. xvii. 14.*) who had listed as volunteers

volunteers under his banner, and were headed and animated by him, appeared as marching after their glorious Leader with exceeding pomp and splendor, to make up his magnificent train, as mounted, like himself, upon white horses, the emblem of gospel-truth and purity, joy and victory; and they seemed to be richly arrayed with fine linen, bright and pure, an emblem of *the robe of righteousness and garment of salvation*, which, as has been said, (*ver. 8.*) signify *the righteousnesses of the saints*. The meaning of all which may be considered as pointing to such a state of peace and triumph, and of dignity and honour, like kings and priests unto God, that the church of Christ on earth should now be advanced to, as bears a near resemblance of what is enjoyed in heaven.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

15 And to assure me that the Captain of salvation would obtain his victories, not by any power of his followers, as of themselves, but entirely by his own power, as exerted either immediately, or mediately by them, I saw the appearance of a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, an emblem of his dreadful threatnings, and of his having the power of the sword, which he would use according to his word, in taking righteous vengeance on the idolatrous, persecuting, and sinful nations, and would rule over them by his authority and power, as *with an iron scepter*, and *dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*, (*Pf. ii. 9.*): And as, their iniquity being full, they were thoroughly fitted for destruction, like clusters of grapes fully ripe to be trodden and squeezed in a wine-press; so he would *tread them in his anger*, and *trample them in his fury*, (*Isa. lxiii. 3.*) and thereby crush them to death by terrible impressions of the heaviest wrath, which is no less than *that of God Almighty*, whose power is infinite and irresistible; and none can stand before his indignation, or abide in the fierceness of his anger. (*Nab. i. 6.*)

16 And he behath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

16 And this victorious avenger of his church upon his and their enemies was further represented, as having an inscription of another of his distinguishing titles, like a motto wrote upon his upper raiment, and particularly on that part of it which covered his thigh, the place where the sword usually hangs in order to its being drawn, (*Pf. xlv. 3.*) and where it might be visible to all around him, importing, that he is, and by his mighty acts soon would effectually prove himself to be, by way of eminence, the sovereign Lord and Ruler of all the potentates, princes, and nobles, of the earth (far beyond what the vain-glorious monarchs of the East could

claim) to govern, influence or restrain, save or destroy them; and to do his will, and work by and upon them, as seems best in his sight.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

17 And the more deeply to impress me with a sense of the dreadful, extensive, and compleat devastation he would make upon all his antichristian enemies, I beheld an angel as illustrious and conspicuous to the whole world, as if he stood in the midst of the sun to be seen of all: And with a voice strong and loud enough to be heard far and wide, he summoned all the ravenous birds that fly in the region of the air, saying, in allusion to a day of general slaughter, in which the dead bodies of the slain are exposed to be devoured by those voracious animals, Come and gather yourselves together, to eat the carcases of those that fall in battle; which the *King of kings and Lord of lords*, (ver. 16.) who is *the great God*, (1st. ii. 13.) has prepared for you to feast upon, as in a field all over covered with the dead bodies of vanquished and slaughtered armies; which may be considered as Christ's call to his people on earth, by a commissioned angel, to rejoice and triumph over them, like his guests, invited to feast on the sacrifice which he would make to his wrath and justice, for their actual deliverance from the power of those that hated and oppressed them.

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

18 Come ye all hither, that, to allude to an ancient prophecy, (*Ezek. xxxix. 17,—21.*) ye may regale yourselves, and feed to the full on the carcases of the wicked kings of the earth, and particularly of the *Roman Popish empire*; and of the commanders of armies, and of men of mighty valour; and may feast upon the flesh of war-horses and their riders; and upon the flesh of all ranks and orders of men which had taken the part, and joined in the cause of antichrist, whether they be masters, or servants and slaves, high or low, who shall universally fall a prey to you, like dead bodies on the field of battle; which may be considered as a strong figurative representation of the saints rejoicing to divide the spoil, which will fall to them by the total and ignominious destruction of all their enemies, as a just retaliation for their having slain Christ's witnesses; and not suffered their dead bodies to be put in graves, but rejoiced over them in their calamitous circumstances. (*Chap. xi. 7,—10.*)

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth,

19 Then, after this summons to feast upon the slain, methought I saw the antichristian beast, which represented *Rome* papal, as a persecuting power, in conjunction with the princes and potentates of the earth that sup-

earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

supported it; and the whole *Posse* of forces, consisting of all the wicked and ungodly, whether *Papists*, *Mahometans*, or *Pagans*, even all that they could muster, assembled together to engage in a vigorous and warlike opposition against the *King of kings and Lord of lords*, (who appeared as sitting on a *white horse*, ver. 11, 16.) to subvert his gospel and kingdom; and against his army of faithful servants to destroy them that followed him, as their Captain and Leader.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

20 And the issue of this battle was, that the anti-christian persecuting power, which under one figurative view has been represented as *the beast*, and under another, as *the false prophet*, (chap. xvi. 13.) who pretended to work miracles in the sight, and under the protection of the beast, and by his lying wonders imposed upon, and deluded the nations that had openly professed subjection to the beast, and in token of it, wore its mark, (see the note on chap. xiii. 16.) and paid idolatrous worship to him, and to the images which he had set up as objects of religious adoration. Both these idolatrous and persecuting powers, which may be differently conceived of in their *civil* and *ecclesiastical* capacities (chap. xvi. 13.) fell as captives into the conqueror's hands: And as the chiefs of rebellious armies, when subdued and taken prisoners, use to be most exemplarily punished; so these who were the ring-leaders in the general apostacy and severe persecutions, and in this war against Christ, and his people and cause, were grievously tormented, like persons cast alive into an abyss of fire, burning, like *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, with an intense and everlasting flame, as though mingled with brimstone, to feed and maintain it with the fiercest rage, that it never might be quenched. (*Mark* ix. 43,—48.)

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

21 And the rest of the armies, who, like common soldiers, fought against Christ and his church, under the command and influence of these wicked leaders, were entirely vanquished and exposed to shame, like enemies slain and unburied in a field of battle, by the glorious Conqueror who sat upon the white horse, (ver. 11.) even by the sharp sword, which was represented as proceeding out of his mouth, (ver. 15.) to intimate their being *destroyed by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming*, (2 *Thess.* ii. 8. &c.): And according to the summons given before, (ver. 17, 18.) all the birds of prey fed upon their slain carcases, and were fully satiated with their flesh; which may signify the satisfaction that the church of Christ will have in the utter destruction of the whole power of his and their

their enemies, as the glory of God will be thereby manifested, and a way opened for the happiest and most glorious state of Christ's kingdom on earth, then at hand to take place.

### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

O with what rapturous hallelujahs will the church-militant on earth join the chorus of the church-triumphant in heaven, when righteous judgment shall be executed upon all the powers of popery, and their confederate kings and nations through the world, and when the public marriage of the Lamb shall come! They will then ascribe salvation, glory, honour, and power, with joyful triumph to the Father and Son, either of which may be considered in their song of praise, as the Lord their God, even the Lord God Omnipotent, whose kingdom rules over all, as will then be uncontrollably evident; and who, in distinction from angels and all mere creatures, is the only object of religious adoration. O happy souls, that shall be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and be presented to him in robes of illustrious and spotless righteousness, as a bride richly adorned, and fully prepared for her husband! How glorious will our Lord Jesus appear, when he shall come forth, as riding on a white horse, the symbol of victory, joy, and triumph, to espouse the cause of his people, and take vengeance on the combined armies of his enemies that rose up in a rebellious war against him; and when all his true followers, as beautifully mounted and arrayed, shall march after him, as his pompous train, and sharers in the happy fruits of his conquests, which they also obtain through him! He will then be known to be the essential and declarative word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords; titles so divinely great, as can belong to none but God.—Faithfulness, truth, and righteousness run through all his dispensations; his penetrating wisdom and universal dominion, his just indignation, and awful government and executions will then be eminently manifested, as signified by flames of fire darting from his eyes, by many crowns on his head, by a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, by his raiment sprinkled with the blood of his adversaries, and by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and treading them, as ripe for destruction, in the wine-press of the fierce wrath of God Almighty.—Ah! dismal havoc, that will then be made upon all the enemies of truth and righteousness, of what rank or degree soever, like carcases slain, and left unburied on a field of battle! The beast and the false prophet, all the tyrannical and idolatrous powers of the Papacy, shall be exemplarily punished, like the chief leaders of a rebellion, that are thrown alive, into a sulphurous lake of unquenchable fire; and their whole army shall miserably perish. Then all the saints shall be summoned to seize the spoils of war, to their full satisfaction, like the fowls of the air that feast upon the dead bodies of men, as their prey. Bless the Lord, O all ye his servants that fear him, small and great: For all these are the true sayings of God, testified by the spirit of prophecy to an angel, and to an apostle who are only fellow-servants and brethren in ministering them to us, for our support and comfort under all present tribulations, which shall certainly end in a glorious state of peace, purity, and all prosperity to the church. Hallelujah!

### C H A P. XX.

*An angel descends from heaven who binds and shuts up Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, during which the church reigns with Christ in a glorious state on earth, 1,—6. Satan is loosed again for a little while to deceive the nations once more, and gathering all his forces together, makes his last effort against Christ and his church, which issues in their own final and irretrievable overthrow,*

*and*

and in the eternal torment of the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet, 7,—10. Hereupon the general judgment of the great day is described, in which all the dead are gathered before Christ on his throne, the books are opened, and they are judged; and all, that are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever, 11,—15.

## PERIOD IV.

### TEXT.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

### PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions of the destruction of the papal power and all its adherents, at the end of twelve hundred and sixty years reign of the beast, methought I saw a glorious angel descend, as with a commission from the throne of God in heaven, and as bearing two emblems of divine authority, which carried an intimation of his being the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Angel of God's presence, who had been represented, as *having the keys of hell and death*, and the *key of David to shut and open without controul*, and as *casting out the great dragon*, (chap. i. 18. and iii. 7. and xii. 7,—9.); and who came to *destroy the devil*, as well as *his works*, (Heb. ii. 14, and 1 John. iii. 8.) Accordingly the emblems with which he now appeared were the keys of hell, that horrible abyss (*αβυσσος*) of darkness, misery, and despair, in one hand, and a large strong chain, for binding criminals, in the other; to signify his irresistible power to open the gate of that bottomless pit, and then shut and lock it fast upon those that are cast into it; and to bind up all the force of the devil and his accomplices at pleasure.

3 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

2 Then, to execute his commission, he, as seemed to me, arrested and seized upon the great dragon, who had been described in a former vision, (chap. xii. 9.) as the *old serpent*, whose names, by which he is most commonly known, are *the devil* and *Satan*; the first of which signifies a *slanderer* or false accuser; and the second, an *adversary*, as this wicked spirit most emphatically is, both of God and his people: And the Angel of his presence restrained the evil one from doing any mischief, either by seduction or violence, for a very long space of time, \* which may be called a thousand years, whether

### N O T E.

\* The term thousand is often used in prophetic style in an indefinite sense, for a large and perfect number, as in Deut. i. 11. and vii. 9. and xxxii. 30. Ps. xc. 4. and xci. 7. and cx. 8. Eccles. vi. 8. Isa. xxx. 17. and lx. 11. and 1 Pet. iii. 8. with several other

places; and it is left to the readers judgment to take it either in the indefinite, or the strictly literal sense. But some have imagined (I think without sufficient ground) that the 1000 years are to be resolved into days, and that each day is to be taken for a year,

whether meant precisely of just so many, or indefinitely for a great number of years.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after, that he must be loosed a little season.

3 And the angel threw him down into the great unfathomable deep of confinement and horror, (*Matth. viii. 29. and Luke viii. 31.*) and shut him up as a close prisoner in hell, as in a dark and dismal dungeon, and kept him in safe custody there, the emblem of which was setting a seal over him, in allusion to the custom of securing doors by a seal, like what was set on the stones that were laid at the mouth of the lions' den, and of Christ's sepulchre, (*Dan. vi. 17. and Matth. xxvii. 66.* see the note there.) And all this was done to the end that the great adversary, the devil, might no longer, as in times past, go *about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, (*1 Pet. v. 8.*) nor might delude and mislead the nations of the earth, as formerly, into iniquity, error, and persecution, till those thousand years (*τα χίλια ἔτη*) should be expired; and after *that*, (*ver. 1, 8.*) according to divine appointment and permission, his restraint must be taken off for a very short space of time, compared with his former dominion, and with the thousand years of his confinement; the issue of all which will be to his greater confusion, and the Saviour's greater glory.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not

4 Upon the forementioned deliverance of the church of Christ from all disturbance by the efforts of Satan, I saw an appearance of glorious thrones, and of persons seated with honour and dignity upon them, to whom the authority of ruling over their enemies, and exercising ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction was committed, and for whom righteous judgment had, at length, been given against all those that had unjustly reproached, persecuted, and oppressed them: And I beheld a representation of the souls \* of those, who as one society with their

#### N O T E.

year, which would make the duration of this period about 365,000 years.

\* "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," may be considered as meant, not of the individual persons that suffered martyrdom for his sake, but of their successors in the same spirit, who being of the same temper for faith, patience, zeal, and fortitude, and professing the same doctrines with the martyrs, were one body with them, and so in the stile of prophecy might be spoken of, as though they were the same persons, in like manner as John the Baptist is called Elias, because he came in the spirit and power of Elias, (*Mat. xi. 14. and xvii. 12.* compared with *Luke i. 17.*) and as Rome-antichristian is in several

places of this prophecy called Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon, on account of its being like them in idolatry, pride, luxury, and cruelty: and the two witnesses that were to prophesy in sackcloth 1260 days of years, (*chap. xi. 3.*) could not mean the same individual persons, but a succession of them that persisted in the same faith and profession: (See also the note on *1 Thess. ii. 3.*) When therefore it is said, "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," this may be taken, according to prophetic stile, in a metaphorical sense, and may signify a succession of such, in like manner as the two witnesses being killed, and their "dead bodies rising and

standing



not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

their predecessors, may be said to have suffered martyrdom by being beheaded, or put to other cruel deaths for the sake of their faithful testimony to Christ, as the only Saviour, and to the written word of God, as the only rule of faith, worship, and obedience; and who had maintained their integrity with the Spirit, faith and patience of martyrs, without submitting, through fear of tortures or death, to the authority of the Pope, or paying religious homage to him, or to any idols of his setting up; and had neither promoted nor owned the power of the antichristian-beast, as though they had been distinguished by bearing his badge upon their foreheads or their hands. (See the note on chap. xiii. 16.) And these, together with their successors of the same spirit, lived as a spiritual and political body in a much happier state than ever before: and the *Jews* being converted, and the fulness of the *Gentiles* brought in, they, who

## N O T E.

before

"standing on their feet," is to be understood, chap. xi. 7, 11. and as the restoration of Israel from their captivity is called their "living and standing on their feet, and God's opening their graves, and causing them to come out of their graves, (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10, 12.) and as the conversion of the Jews in the last days is spoken of, as "life from the dead, (Rom. xi. 15.) Accordingly the saints "living and reigning with Christ," may relate to their abundance of spirituality, purity, and glory, light, love, and joy, tranquillity and safety, and to the power of civil magistracy, as being in their hands, and exercised with great authority and success, for suppressing all iniquity and prophecies, and promoting true religion and holiness in those happy days.—I am not insensible, that many learned and pious men have put a literal construction on this prophecy, to denote a proper resurrection of the dead bodies of former martyrs, and (as some of them think) of all other departed saints; and they accordingly suppose that their dead bodies shall be raised to life, and reign in a glorious manner with Christ, as personally and visibly sitting on his throne for a thousand years upon earth. But as I can scarce think that the corporal presence of Christ will be removed for a thousand years from heaven to this earth, to a literal resurrection of all the bodies of the saints is spoken of, as "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," in order to their meeting the Lord in the air, and being with him, not on earth, but for ever in heaven, (1 Cor. xv. 51. and 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) And after the extinction of this thousand years, and after Satan shall be loosed again for a little while at the end of them, we have an account of the general resurrection of all persons, without any exception, or the least

hint that the martyrs, or any other saints, had rose so long a time before, ver. 12, 13. of this chapter. (See the notes there.) And as a proper resurrection is never expressed in Scripture by the reviving or living again of the soul, but only of the body; so it seems extremely forced to understand the "living again of the immortal souls" of them that were beheaded as descriptive of a literal resurrection; and a resurrection of the bodies of glorified saints to live on earth for a thousand years, seems inconsistent with the sublimer tenacity and honour that their souls were possessed of before in heaven, and with their being liable to be deceived, in case Satan had not been restrained, as also with the trouble that must necessarily arise to them from the vigorous opposition which he and his army would make against them at the expiration of the thousand years in which he was bound. It must likewise be an exceedingly deplorable of their refined dignity and delight in the immediate presence of Christ on his heavenly throne, to exchange them for any pleasures or honours upon the earth, especially if (as some Millenarians imagine) they are to be entertained with any sensitive enjoyments. (See Dr Whitby on the Millenium, and Mr Durham's lectures, introductory to his exposition of this chapter.) I therefore rather incline to think that, according to the stile of prophecy, and particularly in this book, which is figurative, all this relates, not literally to the resurrection of the martyrs or other saints, and the personal reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth; but figuratively, and in a spiritual sense, for glorious days of long continuance to the church on earth: whether for the precise number of a thousand years, or not. (See the note on ver. 2.)

before had *suffered with Christ*, (Rom. viii. 17. and 2 Tim. xi. 12.) now reigned with him on earth, under him, and by virtue of his powerful influence, and of their relation to him, in a glorious state of rest, love and peace, of light, liberty, and holiness, of victory and dominion over their enemies, and of all manner of prosperity and safety, during the forementioned thousand years, in which Satan was bound, and shut up in prison, that neither he, nor his instruments might deceive or annoy them.

5 But the rest of the dead I ved not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

5 But as to the rest who, in contradistinction to these, had *worshipped the beast*, &c. and were *the remnant that were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse*, (chap. xix. 21.) \*; they were so entirely subdued, that they lost all their power and authority, and had no successors of the same wicked and active spirit and temper to survive them till the thousand years of the saints living and reigning with Christ were expired; and so, during this glorious period, the antichristian persecuting party will be reduced to a political death, as the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth had been before: And then the church of Christ will be so exceedingly happy and prosperous in all its temporal and spiritual concerns, as may justly be esteemed, in a metaphorical sense, a resurrection from the dead, as the restoration of *Israel* from their captivity, and the general conversion of the *Jews* are described, (*Ezek. xxxvii. 10, 12. and Rom. xi. 15.*) this glorious state of the church in the *Millennium* may well be called *the first resurrection*, as it will precede, and may be considered as a *figure* of the resurrection of the body afterwards unto eternal life.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

6 That man is richly blessed of God, and effectually sanctified by his Spirit, that shall share in all the honours and delights of this *first resurrection* to a state of freedom from his former troubles and temptations, and of as complete happiness and conformity to the holy image of Christ, as can be enjoyed on earth, and *that*, as a certain pledge, earnest and lively foretaste of all perfection in heaven. Though such as these may die corporally as well as the wicked, they shall not, like them, die eternally, or feel any of their miseries in the lake

#### N O T E

\* "There is mention, (says Mr Lowman) in this prophecy, of two sorts of dead persons; those who were slain for the "witness of Jesus," and those that were slain "by the sword of him that sat on the horse." As here is an account of the death of faithful Christians by their persecutors, and of their persecutors themselves by

Christ, these persecutors are called the *remnant*, the *rest*, (*οι λοιποι*).—Thus the dead church raised to life, and living and reigning for a thousand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thousand years were finished, will exactly agree in the same figurative meaning," &c. (See the whole of his note.)

lake that burns with fire and brimstone, (chap. xxi. 8.) ; which may be called *the second death*, as it comes after the death of the body : But they, in a succession of them, shall be visibly consecrated to God the Father, and to his Son Jesus Christ, as a kingdom of priests, entirely devoted to their service in the beauties of holiness, with freedom and delight ; and, as has been said, (*ver. 4.*) they shall be advanced to all civil and religious dignity and authority with Christ, in a due subordination to him, their Lord and king, through the whole duration of the thousand years of that most happy state of the church on earth.

## P E R I O D V.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

7 And at the expiration of the thousand years, in which the saints shall triumph with glory, and meet with no disturbance from any of their enemies, their grand adversary, the devil, shall be again suffered to go forth for a little season, as out of his prison, in which he had been shut up, (*ver. 3.*) ; and shall try his last and utmost effort against them ; their happy state on earth not being perpetually to abide, as that of the heavenly state will.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

8 And Satan being released, by divine permission, from the total restraint that Christ had laid upon him for a thousand years, will then pursue his own malicious temper and designs, as he had done before, against Christ and his church, by endeavouring, once more, to delude and draw after him people of various nations, whether consisting of such formal professors, as externally fell in with the church, and durst not do otherwise, in the years of its flourishing state, but were at heart disaffected to the purity of the gospel and the power of godliness ; or consisting of such, as thro' enmity or fear, flew to as distant countries as they could ; even all secret and open enemies to real religion, where-ever they were spread abroad toward the East, West, North, and South through the earth : These, for their great multitude, and for their wicked, envious, ambitious and oppressive temper, and the utter destruction which they at last will be brought to \*, may figuratively be styled *Gog and*

## N O T E.

\* All the guesses I have met with about the signification of Gog and Magog, in an application of it to any particular nation, people, or party upon earth, or to the wicked that were politically dead, and supposed to be now raised again, appear to me so very unsatisfying, fanciful, and unlikely,

that I have contented myself with such a general account, as, according to the stile of prophecy, so familiarly used in this book, may answer to the character of Gog and Magog : For as, in this book of prophecy, the antichristian powers were styled Egypt and Babylon, (chap. xi. 8. and xvi. 19. and xvii.

and *Magog*, who, as *Egypt* and *Babylon* had been before, were the last powerful and inveterate adversaries to *Israel*, according to the prophetic account of them, (*Ezek.* chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix.) all these will Satan practise upon, by his artful insinuations, to assemble themselves together into one grand army, and unite their forces, by all ways and means possible, against the church, to mar its prosperity, and regain his lost power over it; and they were such a prodigious multitude, as, like the sand of the sea-shore, is innumerable.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

9 And I saw in my vision, that this huge host, with Satan at their head as their captain-general, spread themselves over the face of the earth, and particularly over the breadth of *Immanuel's* land, (*Isa.* viii. 8.); and, to allude to the encampments of *Israel* about the tabernacle in the wilderness, (*Numb.* ii. 2, &c.) they surrounded the tents of God's peculiar and holy people, in the midst of which his tabernacle was set, that they might harass and distress them: And, to allude to *Israel's* settlement afterwards at *Jerusalem*, these bold enemies encompassed the church, which, like a city was compacted together in beautiful order, and which God had loved, and chosen and delighted to dwell in, that they might besiege, and destroy it by their united attacks upon it: and while they were engaged in this daring attempt, the fire of God's wrath, like what he threatened to *Gog* and *Magog*, (*Ezek.* xxxviii. 22. xxxix. 6.) came down from heaven, and utterly consumed them in the general conflagration of the last day, and in the eternal fire that follows it! an emblem of which had been given in the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, as God rained fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy those wicked cities. (*Jude*, ver. 7.)

10 And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.

10 And the devil himself, that grand deceiver, who had influenced his subjects to combine together, and set themselves in battle-array against the church, and had headed them in their opposition to it, was thrown down from all his dominion, and plunged into a deep and large pit, which burned with the most dreadful torture, as with unquenchable fire and brimstone; where the persecuting and idolatrous papal powers, that had been represented under the figures of the beast and the

false

#### N O T E.

5.) because they were ancient oppressive enemies to *Israel*; so the last enemies to the true church, after the thousand years of its prosperity, before the second coming of *Christ*, may be styled *Gog* and *Magog*, be-

cause they were the last powerful enemies to *Israel*, after their deliverance from captivity, before his first coming, as appears from the 36th, 37th, 38th, and 39th chapters of *Ezekiel*.

false prophet, were already suffering the due reward of their abominable and complicated iniquities, (*chap. xix. 20.*); and the judgment of the great day being then at hand, to which Satan was *reserved in everlasting chains of darkness*, (*Jude, ver. 6.*) he shall be, not barely restrained, as he was before, for a thousand years, (*ver. 2, 3.*); but shall be exquisitely tormented, together with those his chief instruments, incessantly without relaxation or end, in the *everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*, (*Matth. xxv. 41.*); which may be called a *lake of fire and brimstone*, in allusion to the sulphureous lake, where *Sodom and Gomerrah* stood, when the Lord *rained fire and brimstone upon them* to destroy them. (*Gen. xix. 24, 25.*)

## P E R I O D VI.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

11 And for the execution of divine wrath upon these ringleaders in wickedness, and upon all that lived and died under their dominion, I further beheld a magnificent throne of judgment, awfully glorious, and shining with illustrious light, and spotless purity, free from all injustice; and saw the Lord Jesus, as Judge of the whole world, seated upon it, whose appearance was so august, powerful, and tremendous, that all nature seemed to fly before him; and the former state of the earth, and of the elementary heaven *passed away; which, being set on fire, were dissolved and melted with fervent heat*, in order to the introduction of *the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness*, (*2 Pet. iii. 10,—13.*) the present frame of things so entirely vanished, that there was no remainder of them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before

12 And I saw, in this vision, all the dead, both righteous and wicked \*, which were now raised from their graves, whether they were high or low, rich or poor,

## N O T E.

\* This description of the final judgment exactly corresponds to our Lord's own representation of the universal judgment, (*ch. xii. 12.*) "when he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him," at the same time, for judgment to pass on the righteous and the wicked, according to the proof that shall then be given of their different characters, (*Matth. xxv. 31,—46.*) and, speaking of that solemn day, he said, "Then he shall reward every man according to his works," (*Matth. xvi. 27.*) The apostle Paul also says, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds," (*Rom. ii. 6.* See

the note there) and that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad," (*1 Cor. v. 10.* see also *1 Thess. i. 7,—10.*) It therefore is most natural to consider "the dead's standing before God, and their being judged according to their works," as meant not barely of the judgment of the wicked, but of the universal judgment of all mankind; nor is it otherwise easy to conceive why the book of life, which the wicked have no share in, is here so particularly mentioned in the process of this judgment.

before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

poor, magistrates or peasants, older or younger persons, standing in the immediate presence of Christ, to be judged by him, who is God, as well as man, to whom *all judgment is committed*, (John v. 22.); and, to allude to the most accurate modes of process in human courts of judicature, methought I saw the book of divine omniscience, in which are critically registered all the thoughts, words, and deeds, of every one; and the book of conscience, which tallies to it; and the books of the law of nature, and of the revealed law and gospel, the only rules of judgment, (*Rom. ii. 12,—16.*) all opened, in order to this innumerable multitude's being brought to their public and solemn trial: And another book of eternal decrees of love and grace was opened, which contained the names of all that were enrolled in heaven for eternal life, as those whom the Father had given to the Son to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved by him, on which account it may be stiled *the Lamb's book of life*, (chap. xiii. 8. and xxi. 27.) And all the dead, being raised again, were tried, together with those then alive on earth, (*1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. and 1 Thess. iv. 15,—17.*) and had a decisive and final sentence passed upon them, answerable to the things that were recorded in those books respectively, according to the evidence of, and in proportion to, their several works, whether good or bad, as they testified in judgment for, or against their being real Christians.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

13 And this final judgment was so absolutely universal, that not only they, that had been buried in the earth, rose out of their graves; but they also, that had been sunk and covered in the waters of the great deep, were raised by the omnipotent command of him who sat upon the throne, (*ver. 11.*) so that neither the earth, nor the sea, nor any repository whatsoever, could retain their bodies under the power of death, but were forced to resign them †. And the souls of them that existed in a separate state, by means of death, were summoned, to appear together with their bodies, before the great Judge of all; and could be no longer held in their state of separation, which resigned them. And all these were impartially tried, and received sentence according to the kind, and in proportion to the degree of their respective works, whether good or evil, as witnessing for or against them.

#### N O T E.

† As the Greek word (αἵμα) commonly signifies "the state of separate spirits, I have taken it uniformly in this sense, both here and in the next verse, where it seems to

24 And make a much easier construction of death and hell being "cast into the lake of fire," than any that I have met with.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: This is the second death.

14 And from this time forward, not only death and the grave lost all their dominion; but the dead bodies of the wicked, and their souls that had before existed in a separate state, were, in execution of the sentence passed upon them, thrown with mighty vengeance into the dreadful abyss of unquenchable fire, to be tormented there for ever with the devil, and the beast and the false prophet, (*ver.* 10. and see *Matth.* iii. 12. and *Mark* ix. 43,—48.) This may be called emphatically *the second death*; as it comes after that of the body, and is inexpressibly more terrible; and shall never end in a resurrection to eternal life.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

4 And whosoever he were, that, upon the opening, of the books, and the critical and all-searching trial of that solemn day according to them, was not found, by the produced evidences, to have been written in the forementioned book of life, was immediately cast into the burning lake to be tormented there for his evil deeds, as with the fire of divine wrath which never shall be quenched. But the righteous shall enter into life eternal, as will be represented in the next vision.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a glorious time of light, liberty, love and peace, purity, joy and triumph, shall the church of true believers enjoy upon earth, after many years of darkness, trouble, and oppression! The Lord Jesus will bind and shut up Satan, that old serpent, the devil, as in prison: The cause of truth and holiness shall revive with great power, spirituality, and splendor: And they, who, with the constancy, patience, and spirit of martyrs, had courageously renounced all idolatry, wickedness, and error, and maintained a good profession of Christ and of his gospel in the worst of times, shall, together with their successors of the same spirit, live and reign with him, under his protection and smiles, for a thousand years upon the earth. And O with what honour and acceptance will they then appear, like royal priests to him, and to God the Father through him! This will be a blessed revival from their former low and distressed circumstances, and be as life from the dead, before the resurrection of the body; and therefore may be figuratively called "the first resurrection; and they, that bear a part in this, shall be secured from eternal misery, which is the "second death." But how vain would it be to expect an everlasting continuance of such a happy state on this earth! At the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will, in some measure, be let loose again for a little while, and be permitted to go forth, once more, to deceive the nations throughout the world, and gather all his numberless forces together from among them, who may be compared to Gog and Magog, those last enemies of Israel, to attack and disturb the saints, the beloved city of the Lord. But, blessed be God, this regained power and last effort will be very short, and certainly end in the utter destruction of the devil, and all his adherents, who shall be consumed by fire and heaven, and cast into everlasting flames with him: For Christ will set his throne for judgment, and the present frame of the earth and aerial heaven shall be dissolved at his appearing. Then there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, wheresoever they were buried, in the earth or in the sea; and the final judgment of all mankind will, upon trial out of the books which shall be opened, publicly and unalterably determine the eternal state of every one of them for inexpressible happiness, or misery, according to their respective works, whether they be good or bad. Then all the ungodly,

ly, whose bodies were dead, and whose souls had been in a separate state, and not found to be written in the book of life, shall, according to the just sentence passed upon them for their evil deeds, be cast into everlasting burnings. But O the happiness of the righteous; as described in the following chapter!

## C H A P. XXI.

*In consequence of the final judgment, the blessed state of the church-triumphant is represented in general, under the figures of a new heaven and new earth, and of the New Jerusalem, where God dwells, banishes all sorrow from his people, and makes them completely happy, in opposition to the doleful state of the wicked, 1,—8. And is more particularly described in its heavenly original, lustre, and glory, secure defence and bright ornaments, under the figures of precious stones, high walls; 12 gates, guarded by 12 angels, and 12 foundations inscribed with the names of 12 apostles, 9,—14. In its beautiful structure under the figure of an exceeding large city four square, and consisting of the richest and finest materials, 15,—21. In its consummate felicity, as irradiated with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, exclusive of all the comforts of this world, which are figured out by the light of the sun and moon, 22, 23. And in the free access of vast multitudes, of all nations and decrees, through the open gates of this city, the glory of which will swallow up all earthly honours, and the inhabitants of which are perfectly holy, 24,—27.*

## P E R I O D VII.

## TEXT.

AND I saw a  
new heaven,  
and a new earth:  
for

## PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the preceding visions, which ended in the final judgment, another followed, in which I beheld the blessedness of the saints in glory\*, as figured out,

## N O T E.

\* Those interpreters that are for the personal reign of Christ "a thousand years up-  
"on earth," and some others with them, consider the description given of the glorious state of the church in this and the former part of the next chapter, as a large comment upon what had been more briefly said in the preceding chapter about the Millennium; and so confine it to the happy state of the church's thousand years reign with Christ on earth: And it must be owned, that several passages, especially taken by themselves, seem to have an aspect that way. But it appears to me, that, viewing them in connection with the whole, they may fairly admit of a construction, (as may be seen in their places) very consistent with the heavenly glory; and that there are other expres-

sions too high and strong to be applied to any state short of heaven itself. As, for instance, here the saints see the face of God and the Lamb, (chap. xxii. 3, 4.) which the Scripture always represents as peculiar to the heavenly state; and their reigning here is said to be "for ever and ever," (chap. xxii. 5.) after the general resurrection and judgment, (chap. xx. 12, 13) in opposition to their reigning a "thousand years on earth," after the first resurrection; and it is not said of them that they shall not die, only that the "second death has no power on them," (chap. xx. 4, 6.) But it is said of this blessed state, "There shall be no more death," (chap. xxi. 4.) Other particulars of like sort will appear in the exposition. (See also Durham's first lecture on this place.)

And



for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

out, like the state of the *New Testament-church* (Isa. lxx. 17. and lxxvi. 22.) by a new heaven and new earth; which may be so called with respect to their form and qualities, signifying an entirely new fabric, as emblems of the new state of happiness that will then be introduced: For the former elementary heaven, and this earth, not with respect to their substance, as tho' they were to be annihilated; but with respect to their frame and use, which are suited to the accommodation of its present inhabitants, and yet become noxious by reason of the fall of man, were dissolved: And I observed, that in this new and most excellent structure there was no sea, as there is in this terraqueous globe: Which might intimate that, in this new blissful state, there shall be no tumultuous passions, like *the troubled sea*, (Isa. lvii. 20.) nor any mischievous enemies to disturb the peace of its inhabitants, like *the beast that rose out of the sea*, (chap. xiii. 1.) or *the great whore that sat on many waters*, (chap. xvii. 1.) and so there shall be no calamity of any kind.

1 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

2 And I John who had all these visions, and have faithfully recorded them, saw the church of Christ shining in her brightest glory; which was presented to me under the figure of the city of the Lord, as made perfect in holiness, even the *heavenly*, which may be stiled the *new Jerusalem*, on account of its excellency, and in contradistinction to the ancient and beloved city of that name upon earth; this being a *city that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*, (Heb. xi. 10.) a plan of which was exhibited to my view; as descending from God's throne out of heaven toward me, to give me an opportunity of the more distinctly and critically observing it; and to assure me that its original

#### NOTES.

And as it might justly be thought strange, that a prophecy, which is all along designed for the support, encouragement, and comfort of the church under all present tribulations, should give us no view of the final, complete, and everlasting happiness of all true believers and suffering saints in heaven; so it looks like perplexing and subverting the orderly progress of the prophecy, to suppose, that, after an account of the general judgment, and the misery of the wicked, at the close of the last chapter, no notice should be taken of the heavenly blessedness of the righteous; but that, instead thereof, our thoughts should be carried back again to the Millennium which preceded them. Upon the whole, therefore, I am most inclin-

ed to think with others, that the regular series of the prophecy requires that, after it had led us to the universal judgment, and the punishment of the damned, (chap. xx. 11, —15.) it should of course go on to the state of the church-triumphant in heaven, as the crowning part of its noble design for raising the hopes and joys of believers under all present trials and afflictions, (vid. our Synopsis and our note on 1 Pet. iii. 13.) Or that, if it be supposed to have any relation to the Millennium, it is only to what will then be fulfilled in part, as a lively figure of what will be much more gloriously completed in the heavenly state.

\* Though "the holy city, the new Jerusalem," is represented as "coming from God"

nal is from heaven, that no such city was ever on earth, and that all its glory shall be perfected in heaven. It made a most beautiful and delightful appearance, which may be compared to that of an amiable bride, richly adorned, and quite ready to meet her bridegroom on the day of solemnizing their marriage; this holy city being an emblem of the church, which is espoused to Christ, and shall then appear in robes of righteousness and of immortal light and honour, and be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.* (Jude, ver. 24.)

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

3 And the meaning of this vision was explained by a loud articulate voice, which I heard, as coming out from heaven, saying, in allusion to the *Shechinah*, which appeared in the tabernacle, as an illustrious token of the divine presence among the *Israelites*, behold, God has fixed his most glorious residence in the midst of his heavenly church, which consists of the whole number of his chosen, redeemed, and called from among men of all nations: And he will henceforth dwell perpetually in the most immediate manner with them, and they shall be owned and honoured by him as his peculiar people, and the great God himself will intimately commune with them; and suitable to the near relation into which he has taken them, as their covenant-God and Father, will make up a complete portion of all possible happiness to them in the full enjoyment of himself for ever and ever. (*Chap. xxi. 5.*)

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

4. And in this state of heavenly bliss, God, by his immediate presence, will not only relieve their sorrows, but entirely remove them, that they may never have the least occasion to weep, or ever shed a tear, as formerly on any account whatsoever; and there shall be no more mortality or liability to death, as there was while they lived in the lower world; nor shall there be any thing of a grievous nature to afflict them; nor any outcry (*κλαυγῆ*) by reason of oppression, frights, or fears; nor shall there be any more pain or sickness of body, or anguish of spirit, which they were subject to while they dwelt in mortal flesh: For all defective and uncomfortable things, and sin, the root and cause of them all,

are

#### N O T E.

"God out of heaven," here, and in ver. 10. This may relate to its draught or model visibly descending from thence to the apostle John, that he might distinctly view it, as the sheet did to Peter in his vision, (Acts x. 11.) rather than to the place where the city itself should be. And the same man-

ner of expression follows with relation to the "great voice out of heaven," which our apostle heard, ver. 3. (*αὐρὴ φωνῆς*) However the heavenly state itself is expressed by the very same phrase, chap. iii. 12. and is called "our house, which is from heaven," 2 Cor. v. 2. (*οἰκὸς οὐρανόθεν*)

are in that glorious state absolutely and eternally banished to the remotest distance from them: They are all over and gone, never to return, that nothing may ever interrupt or abate their consummate happiness; which is more than can be said of any condition on this side heaven. (See the notes on ver. 1. and chap. xx. 2.)

3 And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

5 And as an additional confirmation of all this, The blessed \* God, who has been often represented in my visions, as sitting upon the throne, said, Behold with admiration and joy, I make an entire change, by my power and grace, in the present state of all things, and completely new-form all the happy and holy inhabitants of the new world. And these are matters of so high importance for supporting and encouraging the faith, hope, and patience of the church, under all its tribulations on earth, that he commanded me to record them in writing for their comfort: For, said he, All these declarations are infallibly true, and shall faithfully be performed to their eternal joy.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.

6 And, for their further encouragement, he said to me, with respect to this wonderful change, The consummation of all things is now come; all the elect are gathered in, the whole scheme of providence and redemption, and of my love and grace to them is completed; and all the prophecies, contained in this and the foregoing visions relating to their sufferings and glory, and to the destruction of their enemies, are now brought to their final issue. To this he added concerning himself, in allusion to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, I am Alpha and Omega; the Author and Finisher both of the old and new worlds, and of the happiness of my people from first to last: and am unchangeably existent, eternally before, and after all these dispensations. (See the note on chap. i. 8.) And whosoever is sensible of his wants, and earnestly desirous

#### N O T E.

\* "He that sat upon the throne," may possibly be meant of Christ: For I do not find that, in either of the foregoing or following visions, God the Father is ever represented, as immediately speaking and giving orders to the apostle; and Christ had appeared, as seated upon a "great white throne" for judgment, (chap. xx. 11.) and might here call himself "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," ver. 6.) which in several places of this book are titles, that, I think, he assumes to himself. (See the notes on chap. i. 4, 8.—The promise to "him that overcomes," (ver. 7.) evidently agrees with, and is a summary of,

all his repeated promises to "him that overcomes," in the second and third chapters; and his adding here, "I will be his God, and he shall be my God," may be said by him, as well as by the Father; since he is called, "the mighty God, and the everlasting Father," (Isa. ix. 6.) and his people are called "his seed," (chap. liii. 10.) and he is said to "give them power to become the sons of God," (John i. 12.) And as he will present them to himself a glorious church, Eph. v. 27. so he will present them as his children to his Father, saying, "Behold I, and the children which God has given me," (Heb. ii. 13.)

rous of spiritual and heavenly blessings, even unto eternal life, like one that is vehemently athirst, and long for refreshment, to him will I freely, of my own mere favour, give abundant satisfaction and delight, to the utmost of his wishes, in my immediate presence; which may be compared to an everflowing and overflowing fountain of life and consolation, whose perpetually springing waters never fail.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

7 He who, warring a good warfare, with faith and patience, against sin, Satan, and his instruments, and against all the temptations of this present evil world, gains the victory over them, in humble dependence on my strengthenings, shall be possessed of an everlasting inheritance of glory, and of every thing that can contribute to his happiness: And I, the all-comprehending good, and rightful disposer of all things, will be his God and portion for ever; and he shall be partaker of all the exalted privileges of his adoption, as my son. (See the note on *ver.* 5.)

8 But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

8 But, on the contrary, they that are ashamed, or refuse to own or honour me, through cowardice, or fear of reproaches and sufferings on that account; and they that reject the grace of the gospel, through unbelief, and are distrustful of my power, mercy, and promises to support them under, and carry them thro' all tribulations to eternal glory; and flagitious sinners, that indulge unnatural lusts, like the detestable *Sabotees*; and murderers in heart or deed, and especially infamous persecutors of my people unto death; and unclean persons, that are addicted to fornication or adultery; and dealers with familiar spirits, or pretend to be; and worshippers of images, or of any that are not by nature God; and they, that speak falsehoods and lies in hypocrisy, with intent to deceive and impose upon others: All and every one of these, living and dying in impenitence and unbelief, shall have their deserved portion of the most exquisite torments, like persons thrown alive into a great collection of burning-hot materials, such as fire and brimstone; which may be called the second and most terrible death, as it comes after the death of the body, and is an absolute deprivation of all comfort, and an endless intolerable complication of all possible misery.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full

9 Then, to give me a further account of the blessedness of the righteous, there drew near to me one of the seven angels, that were represented in a former vision, (*chap.* xvi. 1. and xvii. 1.) as employed in executing the seven last judgments, which were signified by

fill of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

by pouring out the seven last cups or vials of the wrath of God upon his enemies for their destruction; and he in a free and friendly manner called to me, saying, Come up hither, and I will set before you a particular and distinct emblematical view of the state of the church in her advancement to heavenly glory, suitable to her dignity as the bride, which Christ, the Lamb that was slain, has purchased with his own blood, and espoused to himself in an everlasting covenant, that she, when fully prepared for him by the graces of his Spirit, might celebrate her nuptials with him, as her glorious husband, in all the solemnity, splendor, and joy of the highest marriage-festival.

9 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

10 And this angel, methought in the visions of my mind, conducted me to an exceeding great and lofty mountain, to give me the advantage of a clear and full prospect; and there he exhibited to my view a grand and glorious city of vast extent, and filled with an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, which, in allusion to *Jerusalem's* being called *the holy city*, (Matth. iv. 5) bears that name, as being consecrated to God, and thoroughly sanctified by his Spirit: And I distinctly beheld the model of it, as coming down from God out of heaven, the habitation of his immediate presence. (See the note on *ver. 2*.)

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal;

11 This city of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, was figured out to me as filled with the divine glory, the visible symbol of which formerly appeared in the *Jewish* tabernacle and temple, as the token of God's dwelling in a way of special grace and favour there: And its light of knowledge, purity, honour, and joy, was illustriously bright, like a most excellent stone, even like a splendid jasper-stone, as shining as crystal.

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

12 And it was further represented to me, as a city of the greatest beauty, strength, and security, encompassed about with an exceeding thick and high wall: Which may be considered as an emblem of the almighty and invincible power of the great God and Saviour, for the safety and defence of all its blessed inhabitants: In the wall there appeared twelve gates of entrance from all quarters; which might intimate that the only door of salvation by *J-es* Christ had been opened, thro' all parts of the earth, in the ministry of the twelve apostles: And at the twelve gates, methought I saw twelve angels, one at each gate, standing as guards of state at every avenue of the city and palace of the great king, and as ministering spirits to open the gates to all the heirs of salvation, and to shut them against all that

were

were not written in the Lamb's book of life : (*ver.* 27.) And I saw an inscription of names, one upon each gate, which represented the names of the twelve tribes of the children of *Israel*; and may be considered as emblematical of the whole church of Christ, which was typified by them, and consisted of all the spiritual *Israel*, that were admitted into this glorious city, there to abide for ever.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west, three gates.

13 The position of these gates on each side of this large four-square city (*ver.* 16.) appeared to be in the following manner, answerable to *Ezekiel's* vision of its type, after the names of the tribes of *Israel*. (*Ezek.* xlviii. 31.—34.) On the east side were three gates, upon which were written the names of *Joseph*, *Benjamin*, and *Dan*: On the north side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Reuben*, *Judah*, and *Levi*: On the south side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Simon*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulon*: And on the west side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Gad*, *Alber*, and *Naphtali*, to intimate that none, who in reality belong to the true *Israel* of God, shall be excluded from this *general assembly and church of the first-born*, (*Heb.* xii. 23.)

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

14 And the wonderful wall of this magnificent city was represented as having twelve foundations, on which (in allusion to the custom of inscribing the names of those that lay the first stone in buildings, for a perpetual remembrance of them) there seemed to be written the names of the twelve apostles of Christ, the Lamb of God, who redeemed the church with his own blood, and was laid in the doctrine and ministrations of those first and chief master-builders, as its only foundation, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*, (*Eph.* ii. 20.)

15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

15 And the angel that communed with me appeared, as having in his hand a measuring reed of pure gold, a suitable emblem of the pure and spotless state of this glorious city, and of all that pertained to it: With this, he took the dimensions of the city itself, and of its gates, and of its wall; which may be considered as a figurative representation of its being a state of the most beautiful order and proportion; and that all admissions to it, and securities in it, are exactly according to the perfect rule of the uncorrupted word of God.

16 And the city is both four-square, and the length is as large as

16 And it appeared by the measurement, that the city was just four-square, of the very same dimensions every way; the length being exactly equal to the breadth; which might intimate the perfection, stability

as the breadth : and he measured the city with the reed; twelve thousand furlongs : the length and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

ty and uniformity of that blessed state of the church. And in measuring this heavenly city with the golden reed, it was found to be in compass twelve thousand furlongs, which, reckoning eight furlongs to a mile, are fifteen hundred miles; each of the four sides containing the length of three hundred seventy-five miles; a city of prodigious extent for the reception of an innumerable multitude of blessed inhabitants, far, yea, incomparably far beyond all that ever was known upon earth. The length and breadth of it appeared to be exactly equal, one to the other \*; and its height bore a just proportion to its length and breadth; which may be considered as an emblem of the vast capaciousness of the heavenly city for receiving and accommodating the whole church, when collected altogether, and of its entire harmony and beauty in every part.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

17 Then, methought, he proceeded to measure the height of the wall of this holy city, and found that it rose up, from the foundation to the top, one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the common way of men's measuring from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, which is the same that was used by the angel in measuring the height of this wall; and so it appeared to be out of all danger of ever being scaled and invaded; and may be considered as a figurative representation of the absolute safety of the saints in the heavenly world from all assaults or disturbances from their enemies.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

18 And the materials of this unsurmountable wall were represented in my vision, not as consisting of any thing so mean and brittle as brick, or common building-stone; but of the most durable, sumptuous, strong and beautiful jasper-stone, to render it impregnable and secure against all decay, as well as surprisingly magnificent; which may be considered as an emblem of the everlasting and unchangeable state of blessedness and glory: And the august mansions of the city seemed to be all made of massy gold; or, at least, overlaid with the finest and purest gold, so exquisitely polished, that it

#### N O T E.

\* Mr Lowman observes that it would be out of all proportion to suppose, that either the wall or buildings of the city are to be understood as of equal height with the length and breadth; and that the numbers in this and the next verse are evidently typical. (Perhaps he means mystical.) In one, which is the measure of the breadth and length of the city, the mystical number twelve; taken from the twelve apostles, is

multiplied by a thousand; and in the other, which seems to be the measure of the height of the wall, the same mystical number twelve, is multiplied into itself; and so the height of the wall is represented to be one hundred forty-four cubits, which make about seventy-two yards, according to the lesser cubit, or about eighty six yards, according to the greater. (See his notes on these two verses.)

it appeared as bright and glittering, as the most shining mirror or clearest chryſtal; which may be conſidered as an emblem of the incomparable grandeur, riches, and delights of the heavenly ſtate.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones. The firſt foundation was jasper; the ſecond, ſapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

the fifth, ſardonyx; the ſixth, ſardius; the ſeventh, chryſolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryſopræſus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyſt.

19, 20 And the foundations of the city, which, tho' really but *one*, yet, having been laid by the preaching of the twelve apoſtles, were repreſented as twelve: (*ver. 14*) Theſe, methought, were beautified and adorned with inlayings of all ſorts of the moſt excellent, ſolid, and dazzling ſtones, one in one part, and another in another, in alluſion to the names of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, which were ſeverally engraven on the twelve precious ſtoes in the high prieſt's breſt-plate, (*Exod. xxviii. 15,—21.*) the appearance of ſuch precious ſtones on the foundations of this wall might be conſidered as an emblem of the perfection, glory, and preciousneſs of Chriſt, the only foundation of the church, on which their names were in a manner inſcribed, as thoſe whom the Father had given him, and who are built upon him as their foundation\*. The firſt part of it was repreſented as adorned with a *jaſper*; the ſecond, with a *sapphire*; the third, with a *chalcedony*; the fourth, with an *emerald*; the fifth, with a *sardonyx*; the ſixth, with a *sardius*; the ſeventh, with a *chryſolith*; the eighth, with a *beryl*; the ninth, with a *topaz*; the tenth, with a *chryſopræſus*; the eleventh, with a *jacinth*; and the twelfth, with an *amethyſt*: All which taken together, as being ſtones of the moſt illuſtrious and valuable kind, might figure out the variety and perfection of the glory of Chriſt, the foundation; and of the church and its bleſſings, that are founded upon him.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every ſecond gate was of one pearl: and

21 And the twelve gates of this glorious city of the living God were repreſented to me, as conſiſting of twelve pearls of the greateſt worth and aſtoniſhing magnitude, each gate being only one large pearl, which might be emblematical of Chriſt, as the pearl of great price,

#### N O T E

\* I cannot pretend to determine what, or whether any thing particularly, was ſignified in the myſtical way, by the variety of theſe precious ſtones: — But as far as I can learn from the beſt accounts I have met with of the ſtones themſelves, the jaſper is a ſtone of ſeveral colours, the moſt excellent of which is green, ſpotted with red or purple: The ſapphire is of a ſky-coloured blue, transparent, and very hard: The chalcedony is of a ſhining grey, clouded with yellow, or purple, or blue: The emerald is of an exceed-

ing fine green: The ſardonyx is of a pale red: The ſardius, is like, if not the ſame with the cornelian ſtone, of a blood-colour: The chryſolith is green, with a ſhade of yellow: The beryl is of a pale green: The topaz is of a gold colour, transparent and hard: The chryſopræſus is of a yellowiſh green: The jacinth is of a violet or purple colour: The amethyſt is of a colour nearly reſembling the jacinth: And the pearl is a round, white, hard, and ſhining ſubſtance; and is commonly bred in a ſhell-fiſh.



and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

price, and the only door of salvation and of entrance into heaven : And, methought I saw a large opening, that may be compared to a vastly spacious street \*, where the inhabitants of the city met in full assembly ; the pavement of which was of the finest burnished gold, shining with a lustre as clear and bright as chrystal ; which might be an emblem of the perfect purity, pleasure, and conversation of the general assembly and church of the first-born, in their holy and delightful communion one with another, and with their God in his immediate presence.

21 And I saw no temple therein : for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

22 And though the allusion was all along to the city of *Jerusalem* ; yet there was this remarkable difference, I saw no representation of a temple in this heavenly *Jerusalem*, as there was in the *Millennium*-state itself, in which the temple of God was opened, (see the paraphrase on chap. x. 19.) For the great and blessed Lord God omnipotent, and Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain, are instead of a temple, as they dwell in an incomparably more glorious, visible and immediate manner here, (chap. xxii. 4.) than ever was seen in the earthly temple at *Jerusalem*, or in the latter day-glory ; which might intimate, that all divine ordinances, as the appointed mediums of communion between God and his church in this world, shall entirely cease in the heavenly state ; when, instead of them, the immediate presence of God essentially considered, as inclusive of Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be *all in all*, (see the note on 1 Cor. xv. 28.) with no other medium of conveying felicity and glory to the heavenly citizens, than the person of Christ, as mediator, and God-man, in whom the glory of all divine counsels, perfections, and performances, in their most amiable aspect, will shine, as in their brightest mirror, for ever.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

23 And so illustrious was this city in my vision, that there was no manner of occasion either for the sun, by day, or the moon by night, to enlighten it ; or for any creature to adorn or comfort its inhabitants, as there is in this world, and will be till the dissolution of all things : For the glory of God himself, a symbol of which was given in the *Shechinah* that filled *Solomon's* temple, (1 Kings viii. 10, 11.) and in the *transfiguration*

#### N O T E.

\* Dr Hammond observes, that here, and chap. xxii. 2. The street, or broad place of the city, denotes a place of concourse and resort ; and so synagogues, or assemblies, and streets, are tied together in the same sense,

Matth. vi. 5. And Grotius understands the street of the city to signify a place of public assembly, as in 2 Chron. xxxii. 6. and Job xxix. 7.

tion of our blessed Lord, (*Matth.* xvii. 2. and 2 *Pet.* i. 17.) shone in the most perfect manner to illuminate the whole city; and the glorious Lamb, as in office-capacity, and clothed with human nature, is the purchaser of admission to this light, and the clear medium of it; and as God, in essential union with the Father and Spirit, inseparably concurs with them in diffusing it.

24 And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

24 And those people of all nations of the earth, who, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, are saved from sin and the wrath to come, shall be admitted to enjoy its delightful and illustrious light, and to walk in sweet and holy communion together in the midst of it. And as the converted princes and potentates of the earth had employed all their riches, power, and honour, to subserve the interests of this celestial city; so they bring the products of their good influence into it, and cheerfully resign up all their dignity and authority for it, and counting them as nothing in comparison with it; the glory of which, methought, appeared to be inexpressibly more grand and beautiful, than if all the magnificence and precious treasures of the kingdoms of this world had been collected together to enrich and adorn it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

25 And so absolutely safe are the inhabitants of this city in their sublime mansions, not merely by the height and strength of its walls, and the guard of angels, (*ver.* 12.) but principally and supremely by the immediate protection of the divine presence, that there will be no need of shutting up its gates in the day-time, to secure them against invading enemies; (as is usual to do by cities on earth, when any danger threatens them); and if not in the day, not at all: For there shall be no night to favour any attempts against them; nor the least darkness of any kind, whether natural, or civil, moral, or spiritual, to interrupt, or obscure the light of glory, that will perpetually shine with *meridian* brightness upon them.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

26 And all that come to dwell there will bring the holy fruits of their faithful improvements of their riches and honours into it, and will gladly surrender for it whatever they had possessed of wealth, grandeur, and honour, in any nations of the lower world: All these glories will be swallowed up in that, which infinitely excels them and its splendor may well be considered, as vastly superior to all that could be imagined, were all the affluence, gaiety, and magnificence of the highest ranks of people on earth to be amassed together and laid out to embellish it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

27 And so perfectly pure and holy is this heavenly city, that though its gates are continually open, (*ver. 25.*) yet, as the uncircumcised and unclean were forbid entrance into the holy city of *Jerusalem*, (*Isa. lii. 1.*) so no person or thing (*ὅτι*); no evil temper or disposition, thought, word, or deed, that is morally defiled by any iniquity, or is of a defiling nature, shall ever be permitted, on any account whatsoever, to enter into it: nor any one that lives and dies in any known sin, which, whatever it be, God is of purer eyes than to look upon it, without detestation, (*Habak. i. 13.*); and particularly the sin of *idolatry*, which is, by way of eminence, *the abominable thing that he hates*, (*Jer. xlv. 4.*); nor any one that contrives, forgets, or utters falsehoods with an intent to deceive; not one of either of these: But they and they only, (*chap. xxi. 15.*) shall be admitted into this blissful state, that were registered as it were by name in the Lamb's book of life, which contains all those that were given him by the Father, to be redeemed and sanctified, and brought safe to glory, and that, by holy fruits and effects, shall be proved to be so in the great day of account.

#### REC O L L E C T I O N S.

Who can conceive the immense felicity and glory of the church-triumphant in heaven! All the images of light, beauty, honour, and grandeur, and of riches, safety, and delight, that we are acquainted with, are but faint representations of it. It is all new, and surpassing every thing that can be found, or imagined in the present frame of the universe. It is the holy city of the living God, shining in all its glory; a city built on Christ, who was laid, as its only foundation, by the ministry of the twelve apostles; and its inhabitants consist of the whole number of the chosen, and redeemed, called, and faithful, as collected together, and brought into it, from all nations of the earth; its gates being open to them, who were typified by the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a state of complete and immortal bliss, absolutely secure, and free from all darkness, pain, and uneasiness of every kind, and from death itself; those former things being passed away: And it is enlivened with all the joys and honours of a public solemnization of Christ's marriage with his church; it is inexpressibly more glorious than the most splendid city of beautiful, strong, and lofty walls, erected on solid foundations, and all embellished as with the most precious glittering stones: and magnificently adorned, as with gates of the most costly pearl, at which angels stand, like officers of state: and as if its streets were all over paved with the finest polished gold. All the riches and grandeur of the greatest monarchs, and of all nations of the earth, are so far exceeded by it, swallowed up in it, and cheerfully resigned for it, as not worthy to be compared with its heavenly treasures. It is illuminated, honoured, and blessed, with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, as shining with amiable and divine majesty on their throne of glory, and as the beginners and perfecters of its happiness: inasmuch that it needs no creature-enjoyments, like the sun and moon; nor any ordinances, like the temple at Jerusalem, to assist its heavenly entertainments: For God is Christ will be their God, and the everlasting fountain of all that is great and good: and they shall inherit all things, to the utmost of their wishes, as the gift of free grace; and shall live together in holy, harmonious, and transporting fellowship with God, and Christ, and

and one another, in its ever-shining and unclouded light. But, alas! all that are ashamed of, or afraid to own the Lord, and every unbeliever and habitual liar, with all other impenitent sinners, that are abominable in God's sight, shall be utterly excluded from the heavenly state, and have their portion in everlasting burnings, which is the second death. But, in opposition to these, all they, and none but they, that are written in the Lamb's book of life, as proved by its holy fruits, shall be admitted to the sublime enjoyments of this blessed city. These are the true and faithful sayings of God, which shall certainly have their full accomplishment, to the insupportable misery of graceless sinners, and the consummate joy of saints for ever.

## C H A P. XXII.

*The description of the heavenly state is carried on under the figure of the water and tree of life, and of the throne of God and the Lamb, 1,—5. And, for a conclusion of the whole, the truth and certain accomplishment of all these prophetic visions are confirmed, by way of dialogue between the conducting angel, Christ himself, and the apostle John, who was forbidden to worship the angel, and ordered not to seal the prophecies of this book, which were soon to begin to be fulfilled in their order, and are so sacred as not to be added to, or diminished, upon pain of exclusion from all the blessings promised in them, which shall be conferred on the righteous, and denied to the wicked, when Christ shall come (as he said he quickly would) with a reward to every one, according to his works, 6,—16. To which the spirit and the bride say, Come; and John adds his Amen, and closes all with the usual apostolic benediction, 17,—21.*

## TEXT.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

## PARAPHRASE.

AND the conducting angel gave me some farther emblematic representations of the heavenly Jerusalem, by a vision of a pure river, as clear as crystal, streaming freely and plentifully out of the fountain of the water of life, (*chap. xxi. 6.*) not thro' ordinances, but immediately from the throne of God and the Lamb, who are *one* in the divine nature, and whose throne, as divine persons, is *one*, from whence all blessings are derived in their utmost purity and perfection unto eternal life; which, in allusion to the river that watered the garden of Eden, (*Gen. ii. 10.*) or to the waters in *Ezekiel's* vision, (*chap. xlvii. 1,—12.*) may be considered as an emblem of the *fulnest of joy*, that is in God's immediate presence, and of the immense pleasures that are at his right-hand for evermore, (*Pf. xvi. 11.*)

2 In the midst of the chief place of concourse, or principal street of the heavenly city, (see the note on *chap. xxi. 21.*) and on each side of the river which watered it, methought, there stood a delightful row of  
a most

life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

a most excellent kind of trees \*, like those that *Ezekiel* saw in his vision on the bank of the river, one on one side, and one on the other, (chap. xlvii. 7; 12.) Which may also be considered, in allusion to the tree of life in the midst of the earthly paradise, (*Gen.* ii. 9.) as an emblem of Christ, and of the immortal life of happiness, which all its inhabitants derive from him: And, in this figurative way, he was represented, in allusion to the twelve tribes of *Israel*, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb, (chap. xxi. 12, 14.) as yielding twelve sorts of fruit, to signify the greatest variety and abundance of the most delicious, spiritual, and heavenly entertainments, to the full satisfaction of all the *Israel* of God, according to the doctrine of the holy apostles: and this emblematical tree produced its pleasant ripe fruits, not once a-year only, like common trees; but continually, month after month, without the least intermission, or defect, for ever: And such was the excellent virtue of this tree of life, that its very leaves had a sovereign efficacy to perfect and maintain perpetual health and ease, and to prevent all infirmities, pains, and diseases in the souls, or bodies of the saints that were admitted to partake of it, from among the various nations on the earth.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

3 Yea, so absolutely complete and confirmed is their happiness, that the curse, together with all its dismal effects and consequences, which the fall brought upon all mankind, and which came upon their first parents in the garden of *Eden*, (*Gen.* iii. 16, 19.) shall be actually, thoroughly, and finally removed from them for ever; so that there shall be no remainder of sin or sorrow, or any accursed person or thing there: But the glorious throne of God and of the Lamb, whose divine throne is one, shall be ever abiding in it, as the fountain of its felicity and delight, (*ver.* 1.) without mixture or alloy, and his faithful servants shall pay their solemn homage in the sublimest adorations and praises, and shall do the will of their God and Saviour in the most perfect manner, with all alacrity, constancy, and delight.

4 And

#### N O T E

\* Mr Kennicott thinks, that this tree of life alludes to the "trees on one side, and on the other of the river," in *Ezekiel's* vision, rather than to the tree of life in Paradise. (See his Dissertation on the tree of life, p. 93,—97.) And yet he conjectures that "the tree of life in Paradise" was not a single, or one particular extraordinary tree, (p. 75.) and shews, (p. 81.) that the word

(*וְעֵץ*) a tree, which is singular, is used plurally, and rendered trees, *Gen.* iii. 1, 9; and signifies the whole genus of trees, thro' the history of the creation and fall; unless where it is confined by the emphatic article, or a necessary restriction in the sense — But perhaps, *John's* vision was only of one tree of life, whose branches extended to both sides of the river.

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

4 And they shall have a beatific vision of the blessed God, like *seeing face to face*, (Matth. v. 8. and 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) and shall behold the Lord Jesus in all his glory, as God-man, and *see him as he is* with their bodily eyes, as well as with the eyes of their minds; (John xvii. 24. and 1 John iii. 2.) and, *beholding his face in righteousness, they shall bear his likeness*, (Pl. xvii. 15.) as conspicuously as if his name and the characters of his glorious and holy image were written on their foreheads, in like manner as *holiness to the Lord* was engraven on Aaron's mitre, which was put upon his forehead. (Exod. xxviii. 36,—38.)

5 And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

5 And so illustrious will be their light of knowledge, purity, and joy, that there shall not be the least darkness of error, sin or affliction; and such will be the perfection of this light, that they will have no occasion for creature-assistances to add to their comfort, such as the light of a candle, which is wont in this world to relieve the darkness of the night; or the light of the sun in the firmament to enlighten it by day; which may be considered as emblematical intimations that they shall neither have any need of the faint light of the ceremonial law; no, nor of the clearer light of the gospel, and of its ordinances of divine worship: For the Lord Jehovah himself is the immediate fountain of light to irradiate and fill them with his glory, that *in his light they may see light*, in all its beautiful and transforming manifestations: (Psalm xxxvi. 9.) And they shall reign, like kings on their thrones, with dignity and honour in his blissful presence to all eternity, which will make them a rich amends for all the tribulations that they endured with faith and patience on earth for his name's sake. (See 2 Cor. iv. 17.)

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

6 And the conducting angel, having led me thro' the visions, which ended in the final happiness and glory of the saints, said to me, All the things that you have heard and seen, and recorded for the use, encouragement, and benefit of the church in all ages, shall be faithfully accomplished, and are infallibly true, to be fulfilled in their order. And the Lord Jesus, who in his original nature is, with the Father and Spirit, the only living and true God, (see the note on chap. i. 1.) and who inspired and authorized his holy prophets of old to foretell the things which were revealed to them, relating to his sufferings, and the glory that should follow, (1 Pet. i. 11.) has sent me, his angel, with these divine messages to make known to his servants, of the New Testament church, the things which shall

shall

shall begin to be performed very soon after this revelation of them, till they be gradually compleated in their proper series; and the fulfilment of them all will be in a little space of time, compared with eternity, when they will issue in the consummate happiness of the followers of the Lamb.

7 Behold, I come quickly : Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

7 In further confirmation of all these things, Jesus himself spake, (*ver.* 16. 20.) saying, Observe with attention, admiration, and joy, I am just ready to begin the accomplishment of them, and to carry them on in their proper order, till all shall be fulfilled; and, comparatively speaking, I will ere long come, to put an end to all the troubles of my people, and perfect their felicity in the heavenly state. He is a happy creature indeed, and shall be inexpressibly so for ever, who, in the several periods of accomplishment, carefully considers, and cheerfully embraces, and behaves suitable to the holy, encouraging, and comfortable design of the revelations, which are made in the prophecies recorded in this book, for the use of the church in all ages, till the whole scene shall be finished.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, which shewed me these things.

8 And I *John*, to whom the revelations were made, had all along visionary prospects of all these important things, and heard what was said to explain and confirm them. And when in this manner I had been informed of all the particulars that have been recited, I was wonderfully affected with them, and in a sudden rapture, which almost overpowered my mind, (*see the note on chap.* xix. 10.) I again, through want of recollecting my former error and rebuke for it, prostrated myself, in a posture of adoration, at the feet of the angel, who, by Christ's commission, as I afterwards found, (*ver.* 9.) had discovered these things to me.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.

9 Upon his perceiving this, he instantly reproved, and prevented me, saying, Take heed of paying any religious homage to me, who have no claim to it : For I am not Jesus the Saviour, but only one of his servants, that worship, and adore him, and do his will; and am not the author of these revelations, but a messenger, like yourself, to communicate them to you, as you are to do to the church : and I have herein only acted the part of a fellow-servant with you, and with your brethren in office, the prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel, and with the saints, that shew a just regard to the things delivered in this prophetic book. Let therefore all your adoration or religious worship be paid to the only true God, to whom alone it is due : For the nature of things, and the divine command have fix-

ed an unalterable obligation to *worship the Lord thy God, and him only to serve*, (Mat. iv. 10.)

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

10 And the angel, or rather Christ himself\*, charged me, not to conceal the things contained in this prophecy, as though they were to be sealed up in the book which I had wrote, and so hid from the notice of the church, relating to the troubles they are to expect, and the glorious issues of them: For the time draws nigh, (said he) in which they shall begin to take place, and be carried on in a due series, till they all be fulfilled, which, compared with the succeeding eternity, will be but a little while hence.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

11 Then the state and condition of all mankind shall be unalterably fixed, never to admit of any after-change; but the decisive irreversible sentence shall go forth, saying, He that is destitute of righteousness to give him acceptance with God, as found to be an evil-doer, Let him for ever remain in that deplorable state: And he that is under the prevailing defilement of sin, Let him never be cured of his loathsome disease: And on the other hand, he that is righteous before God for justification to eternal life, and appears to be so by his fruits of righteousness, Let him stand for ever justified in his presence: And he that is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, Let him be for ever *holy, without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*, (Eph. v. 27.) What every one now is, he shall be unchangeably, for misery, or happiness, to all eternity.

12 And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

12 And the more strongly to assure the church of this, and to impress them with it, for their encouragement and joy, Behold, said the blessed Jesus again, (see ver. 7.) I am speedily coming at the appointed time, which shall not tarry, but hastens apace to bring all things to their final issue. And according to ancient prophecies of my coming with my reward, (*Isa. xl. 10. and lxii. 11.*) I who as Mediator and Judge of the whole world, have all power in heaven and earth, will then distribute rewards of grace to the righteous and holy, and inflict condign punishment on the unrighteous and filthy;

#### N O T E.

\* As Christ had spoke, ver. 7. so in this and the next verse, (unless we make the n and ver. 8. a parenthesis) the same person seems to be the speaker, who again said, "Behold I come quickly," &c. ver. 12. And the things here delivered are the more solemnly enforced, on supposition of their being pronounced immediately by the Lord Jesus himself, as giving the charge that this revelation should be made known for the use

of the church, and as foretelling the condition of sinners and saints, in consequence of it, (ver. 12.) which some, taking the imperative for the future tense consider as a prophecy of the different effects that this revelation would have upon them respectively; while others (to whom I incline) consider it as a sentence that will fix their state and temper at the final judgment.



filthy ; and will impartially deal with every one according to the nature and proportion of what he has done in his body, whether it be good or bad, (1 Cor. v. 10.) as it shall then be found to be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

13 And still further to confirm all this, beyond doubt, he again asserted his own divine and mediatorial characters, as he had before (*chap. i. 8, 11.* see the note on *ver. 8.* there,) saying, As the *Greek* alphabet begins with *Alpha*, and ends with *Omega*; so all dispensations of providence and grace, as well as the creation itself, begin and end in me, as the Author and Finisher of them; and I, who eternally existed before them, and shall do so unchangeably after them, will give them their final period at my second coming.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

14 Then it shall appear with uncontrollable evidence, that they are, and for ever shall be, unspeakably happy, who conscientiously attend to, and, from a principal of faith and love, sincerely observe the commandments of God, in all moral obedience, together with all gospel-institutions, and the duties which the Lord Jesus has enjoined in this prophetic book, who will be their Judge at the last day, that they, being hereby proved to be my true and faithful disciples, may have the dignity and authority (*ἰσχυρία*) by my free grant, (*chap. ii. 7.*) and it may be lawful for them to partake of all the great and glorious blessings that are produced by the tree of life, (see the paraphrase on *ver. 2.*); and, in consequence thereof, may have admission through the gates, which are ever open for them, and them only, to enter into the city of God above. (*Chap. xxi. 21, 25.*)

15 For without are dogs and fornicers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

15 For the wicked and ungodly of every character shall be shut out, and utterly excluded from all the honours and delightful entertainments of this glorious city; as particularly, such sinners and antichristian enemies, as for their impurities, opposition to the truth, and persecutions of the saints, may be likened to filthy, fierce, and voracious dogs, (see *Matth. vii. 6.* and *Phil. iii. 2.*) as also pretenders to conjuring and witchcraft; and unclean persons, that addict themselves to fornication, or adultery; and blood-thirsty murderers, that maliciously and unlawfully take away the life of others, or persecute any to death for righteousness sake; and worshippers of images and false gods, or of the true God by external symbols, contrary to his institution; and whoever he be that contrives, has pleasure in, and designedly utters any falsehood to impose upon, and deceive his fellow-creatures, all which may be reckoned among the notoriously abounding crimes of the popish

party : Whosoever lives and dies under the guilt of any of these sins shall be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matth. xxii. 13. See also Rev. xxi. 8.)

15 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

16 Then the Lord Jesus, to satisfy me that I was under no delusion, and to add the greater weight and authority to all that I had seen and heard, directed his words to me, saying, I Jesus, the sovereign Lord of angels, and the Lord God of the prophets, (see the paraphrase on ver. 6.) ; it is I myself who employed my angelic messenger to communicate all these things to you, that they may be declared, as a testimony from me (*ἐκ τῶς ἐκκλησίας*) concerning the churches, and in and among them of this and all succeeding generations to the end of the world. I, who have done this, neither will, nor can deceive you : For I, as God, am the Root, Lord and Source of David's family and kingdom ; and, as man, am David's son, truly descended from his loins : (Matth. xxii. 42, — 45.) And, as was prophesied of the Messiah, (Numb. xxiv. 17.) *I am the Star out of Jacob*, like the bright and morning-star, and the *Sun of righteousness* shining in all my glory, (Malach. iv. 2.) I have rose to put a total end to the night of antichristianism, and to scatter all the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and sorrow ; and to usher in an eternal day of light, purity, and joy, with unclouded lustre.

17 And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come : And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

17 And as these are matters of the greatest consequence, for assuring the people of God of the certain destruction of all their enemies, and of their own complete and eternal salvation, the Spirit of prophecy hereby testifies his approbation of it, and doth the same, as he is the Holy Spirit that speaks in the hearts of believers ; and they, the Lamb's wife, inclusive of the church-militant and triumphant, say with earnest desire and expectation, *Come, Lord Jesus* (ver. 20.) in all thy glory, to fulfil thy gracious promises, and solemnize the marriage with thine espoused bride. (chap. xxi. 2, 9.) And let every one that hears, understands, and believes the things contained in this prophecy, join with the Spirit and bride in saying, *Come, Lord Jesus* : And let every one that thirsts after righteousness, and after the everlasting happiness, which shall be brought to the church at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. i. 13.) come by faith to him for these most excellent of all blessings : and whose heart soever is inclined and desirous to be made partaker of them, let him come and welcome, to refresh his weary soul by drinking gratis without money and without price, of the ever-flowing

and overflowing water of life, which springs from him, (*chap. xxi. 6.*) and will be a fountain of all divine consolation, in its utmost fulness for ever, at his second coming to complete the prophecies of this book, which are to be believed, just as they are here revealed.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book :

18 For I, the divine author of this revelation, (*ver. 20.*) and *the faithful and true Witness*, (*chap. iii. 14.*) do solemnly declare to every one that hears the prophecies contained in this book, relating to the affairs of the church and the world, which shall end in the final destruction of mine enemies, and the complete salvation of my people, If any one, be his character what it will, shall presume to add any pretended visions or revelations contrary to these ; or shall wilfully pervert their meaning, by putting false interpretations upon them, God will certainly inflict upon him the dreadful punishments, that are threatened in this book, and particularly all those that are denounced against impostors and deceivers.

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

19 And if, on the contrary, any one shall dare to detract from, or go about wilfully to explain away, set aside, or nullify any part of the writings, or of the things written in this prophetic book, or shall perversely deny its divine authority, God, in his just resentment, will certainly cut him off from the interest that he professed, or hoped, or *seemed to have*, (*Luke viii. 18.*) in the Lamb's book of life, (*chap. xxi. 27.*) ; and from all the blessings of the heavenly and holy *Jerusalem*, and all the great and glorious things, which are promised in this prophetic book to them *that overcome, and are faithful unto death* : (*Chap. ii. 7, 10, 17. and iii. 5, 12, 21.*) He shall be for ever excluded from them : All which may be considered as a solemn and awful sanction to confirm, not only the divine authority of this book, but of the whole of the New Testament-revelation, as it closes its canon, in like manner, as *Moses* guarded the divine authority of the law, (*Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32.*) and as God himself did the like, in closing up the canon of the Old Testament. (*Malac. iv. 4.*)

20 Ho which testifieth these things, faith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

20 The Lord Jesus, who is the Author of the whole of this revelation, and so solemnly confirms it, (*ver. 18, 19.*) says for the encouragement and comfort of the church under all their intermediate trials and afflictions, I am certainly coming, without delay, as soon as ever things are ripe, which will be ere long, for their perfect and everlasting happiness, and for the utter de-

struction of all their enemies, at the last day. Hereupon I, the writer of these prophecies, to express my faith, together with my earnest desire and hope of it, said, *Amen*, in like manner as the whole church could cheerfully echo back to his voice, saying, So we rejoice and long to have it, and are fully satisfied it will be, Come, Lord Jesus, in all thy glory; Come quickly, as thou hast said, for our help, deliverance, and complete salvation.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. *Amen.*

21 In the mean while, to conclude the whole with an apostolic benediction, suitable to the state of the church, and to the duties incumbent upon it, during its afflictions and trials on earth, May the free love or favour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and all its special fruits and blessings, richly abound, and be manifested, in all seasonable supplies of grace and strength, support, guidance, and consolation, to all and every one of you in every age, who love, look, and long for his second coming! So may it be! and in testimony of my great desire, hope, and assurance of its being so, I heartily say, and let them all join with me in saying, *Amen.*

## REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a faithfulness of joy shall Christ's faithful followers have in the heavenly Jerusalem to banish all their sorrows! There they shall drink at the fountain-head of the water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, as in the midst of them; and shall be ever feasting on the various, abundant, and delicious fruit of Christ's love and purchase, as the tree of life; and be perfectly free from all maladies of soul and body, and from all the dreadful effects and consequences of the original curse: They shall be publicly known and owned to be the Lord's; and shall dwell in the light of his immediate presence, and behold his face in righteousness, without any cloud or darkness at all. And O with what uninterrupted constancy, cheerfulness, and delight, will they then worship, serve, and glorify him! and with what dignity and honour reign with him for ever and ever! How unspeakable is the happiness of those that faithfully observe, and behave in a due correspondence to the prophecies of this book, which is laid open to be read and considered, for the support and comfort of the church under all its present troubles! They who, upon trial, shall be found true believers, by the fruits of their faith, in conscientiously observing the commands of God, shall be authorized and qualified to partake of all the blessedness of the celestial world, and be admitted to an enjoyment of it: But all the wicked and ungodly, of every character, shall be cast into utter darkness. The state and condition of every one shall be finally decided, for happiness, or misery, at Christ's second coming; and they who shall then be unrighteous and defiled, on one hand, or righteous and holy, on the other, shall continue to be so for ever. O solemn thought! How certain and important are these great events! They are testified by the apostle John, and by the angel, who conducted him in his visions, as his fellow-servant, but not as an object of religious worship, which is due to God only: yea, by Jesus Christ himself, who introduces the eternal day of light and glory, like the illustrious morning-star; and who, as the Lord God

of the prophets, sent his angel to communicate these things; and declared, again and again, that he would quickly come to execute them, in judgment and in mercy, till they all shall be fulfilled at the great day of account. How dangerous is it to add to, detract from, pervert, or deny these sacred records, or any other part of the word of God! We should dread doing any thing like either of these, as ever we would escape the torments threatened, and inherit the blessings promised, in this book. And how certainly may we depend on Christ's coming, ere long, with his rewards of justice and grace to every one according to his works, whether they be good or bad! With a view hereunto he says, "Surely, I come quickly." And what is the language of the Spirit in his word, and in the hearts of believers, and their language under his influence, but, "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus?" In the meanwhile, How endearing and encouraging are gospel invitations to thirsty souls to come by faith to Christ, and drink at free cost, and abundantly, of the water of life? That we severally may do so, while we are under the dispensation of gospel-grace, May the free love and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and every happy fruit and manifestation thereof be continually with us all! Amen.

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